

Selected Myths and Folktales from the 'Weenhayek

recorded by Jan-Åke Alvarsson in 1983-1985

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Translated from Spanish to English

by Eric Paul Bredvik  (revised by Jan Jokisch  and Katja Mellmann ,

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Note

(cf. vol. 8, pp. 23-25)

All words and terms in 'Weenhayek have been italicized, except for the more common names of the protagonists. When an animal's name is written with a capital letter, this indicates that it is a personalized being. When that same name is written in lowercase, this means that the animal merely acts as a generalized representative of its species. However, the division between the two categories is sometimes difficult to establish. The frequent phrase »they say« (or »they say that«) indicates the cognitive space of the myth. Words in [] brackets are insertions by the author to facilitate reading comprehension; words or phrases in () parentheses are clarifications in cases of potential confusion.

Vol. 8:

Màànhyejas, the Storyteller: Tales of Thokwjwaj and 'Ahuutsetajwaj

2.1. Thokwjwaj and the Women That Came from the Sky¹

In the beginning there was a people living in only one place. There was not a single woman, none, only men. They had like, their little village, but without women; only them, the men. And so, Thokwjwaj was with them, always.

The men had started to forage in a different place. Every morning they went to that place to hunt *kyeenaj* (>hidden<).²

One day, they [the elders] say³ that they had been foraging all afternoon. They came with *kyeenaj*, critters of the forest. And when they arrived [home] they began to roast. It was the case that they always left their roasted food on the mats that they had. They say that they had left their roasted food on their mats but when they came back the same evening, their roasted foods were missing. They found it missing, [and were] saying, »Where will my roast be? I had left a lot of roasted food. I had left quite a bit ... Now there are only a few pieces left!«

Another also said, »Yes, I too have lost my roast. Yes, this morning I left a lot of roast. Now there is a small amount (very little) left. I don't know [what's going on] ...«

They chatted among themselves about their food. Others said the same, and [the former replied], »I don't know ...« [However] they didn't make a big deal out of it; they continued foraging. But all of a sudden one day, one said, »Now, I don't know what's going on with our roast, but [I think] it's better if someone stays around to look after our things and our place, to see what's going on with our roasts. In fact, [it is] someone who can do harm to us.«

¹ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M022. The narrator was **Celestino Màànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 8 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

² This animal is a rodent similar to the guinea pig, called >oculto< in local Spanish, a spiny rat, in 'Weenhayek *kyeenaj*, and in Latin *Proechimys sp.*

³ »They say« is a very frequent expression in Màànhyejas's narratives; it is an abbreviation of »the elders say,« that is, »Thus the elderly knew how to tell.« It is an element that reflects the linguistic structure of the 'Weenhayek language, corresponding to, for example, *yookweh* (introductory word of direct quotations that can also mark the end of direct speech).

So they agreed on this. And before they left in the morning, first they chose a man who was called 'Eele', the parrot.⁴ »You can stay today to see what's going on with our roast!«

»Alright, very well,« he said, »I'm going to stay here. I'm going to climb this white quebracho. Since I'm green, I'm going to put myself in the middle of the leaves, and they are not going to see me, not at all.«

So, when the others left, he began to climb the white quebracho that was above their houses, [and he put himself] in the shadows. There he stood, and nothing could be seen due to the leaves, which were green.

The others left. And the time came about eight or nine o'clock, they say. Then, suddenly, 'Eele', the parrot, heard a noise coming from the sky. And when he heard that, they say, after a while, [he noticed] that there was laughter.

»What is that I hear?« 'Eele' said to himself, »I don't know, what's coming from there? It seems like people are coming from there ...«

But the clamor from the sky came closer. Then, 'Eele' saw something that fell from the sky. It looked like ropes. Before the women came down, ropes came down. Then they came down. There were many ropes.

Among themselves, the women had urged one another, »You will not take from me! You will not take from me [what is on] that mat that is my husband's!« they had said. And another said, »Yes, but I have a mat that belongs to my husband. You are not going to take it from me,« she said. And another said the same thing.

Meanwhile, 'Eele', the parrot, was quiet, »I don't know what's coming over here,« he thought.

Then, all of a sudden, the women were descending, grabbing the ropes and starting to fall to the ground. It was a tremendous thing, there were so many women, they say, descending from the sky.

When they had arrived, then they began to go, each one to the mat [of her favorite man] to eat the roasts that the men had left.

'Eele' placed himself to watch the women. And when they ate, then they did not put [the food exclusively] into the actual mouth, but they also put the roast underneath.⁵ They put the roast that they were eating underneath. They put

⁴ 'Eele' is the blue-fronted parrot (*Amazona aestiva*), a favorite parrot of the 'Weenhayek.

⁵ This subject, in literature, is called *vagina dentata*.

more in there than in the mouth. It turns out that the women had another mouth underneath, so they say.

[When he saw this], '*Eele*' then said, »I do not know, what will these women be like?«

Then when they had finished eating, they took a rest. They say that they had started to make threads out of caraguatá, calmly. Some of them were chatting. One said: »Oh, I am going to wait for my husband until he arrives ... Now I am going to weave a llica here.«

So, they began to weave. And the parrot was up on the branch of the white quebracho and was not to be seen.

When the women were bare, with their legs like this [uncovered], starting to make a caraguatá thread, then he said, »Now!« [At once] he took a little leaf of the white quebracho that had a very spiny [pointed] tip, and he threw it underneath. When it fell, it fell directly on the leg of one of the girls. They say that when it fell, it caught on the leg. Then the girls said, »What happened?«

»I don't know ... What could be going on around here? I didn't know how to be like this ...« Then, they started looking around, they say. They [especially] looked up. And when they couldn't see anything, then they started to make caraguatá thread again.

And in that same little while, they say that '*Eele*' had thrown a leaf again. And when the girls looked, they saw him move a little. And that's when they caught him. »Ah, there has been a man here,« they said.

»There is a man,« said one.

»Ah, yes, that is '*Eele*', the parrot! Oh, poor parrot, now I have seen him. You're not going to take him from me, because I have seen him [first]. That is going to be my husband,« she said.

»Oh,« said another. »But I have seen him first. Now I am going to make him my husband. You're not going to take me away, because I've seen him first. That one is going to be mine!«

Well, then they said, »Parrot, you have to come down here!«

So '*Eele*' started to come down, they say, and he didn't know what was going to happen. And when he had come down, [the woman] said: »Now '*Eele*', you have to open your mouth, like this! If you are a young man, then I'm going to marry you.«

And she began to check his mouth, whether he was a young man [or an old man], they say. Because if he had been an old man, then he couldn't have married a girl. It's just that one has to look for an [appropriate] age to marry.

So they [the women] had brought something like seed from the *jwitenukw* (>shadow-and-all<) tree, so they say. Then, when 'Eele' opened his mouth, they say that she had put it into his mouth and when it entered there, they say that it had been like fire. 'Eele' fainted, fell there and then he could not speak anymore.

Then the women fled. They grabbed their ropes and went up to the sky. [Soon] none could be seen.

When it was time, the other men returned and found 'Eele' like that. The parrot could no longer say anything. Then the others asked him, »'Eele', what is the matter with you?«

But he could not answer anything, because he had been struck dumb by the thing the women had put in his mouth. So the parrot said nothing. »Well, [it seems that] the parrot is mute ...« [said one]. »Yes. [But] tomorrow, who is going to be left here to catch [the thieves] in the end?«

Well, they knew there had been something. 'Eele' couldn't tell them [about what had happened], he just looked up, the whole time.

Then one said, »Maybe,« he said, »they came from above ...«

And 'Eele' kept looking up. He couldn't mention anything about the women, but he kept looking up, like this.

Then another asked, »Now, tomorrow who is going to stay here?«

So they chose *Wooyelaj*, [the lizard called] *ututu*,⁶ [as a sentinel for the next day]. In the morning the others said, »Now, *Wooyelaj* is going to stay here to guard [the camp].«

»Ah, yes, I'm going to be here, on the column of the matting, there I'm going to be. They're not going to see me at all, because I'm white, kind of like this little stick.«

So he had done thus, they say. When the others left, he put himself like this, on the little column of the matting. He hugged the stick, so it seemed that he was nothing, that there was nothing there.

⁶ *Wooyelaj* is a small white and green lizard, called »ututu« in local Spanish (possibly *Scincidae* sp.). [Translator's note: spiny lava lizard (*Tropidurus spinulosus*), cf. vol. 6, p. 262.]

When the women came from the sky, they say they checked everything. When one woman grabbed the pole of the matting, she grabbed it right where *Wooyelaj* was. Then he began to move, and the girl was frightened by it.

»What a thing!« she said. »Here's one more man! Now, come over here! We are going to look at you!«

Then *Wooyelaj* went to the woman. And to him they said the same thing they had said to '*Eele*' [the day before].

»Now you have to open your mouth. And if you are healthy, then, if you are handsome, then I am going to marry you.« [And the same thing happened with *Wooyelaj* that had happened with '*Eele*'.]

Then the women began to laugh at him, because he could no longer speak.

Then the women again went to the sky and in the evening again the men returned. [When they saw *Wooyelaj*], they said, »And why are you like this?«

They found that also *Wooyelaj*, the ututu, was mute, just like '*Eele*', the parrot.

»But how is it, what can it be?« [said one].

»Now, what are we going to do?« said another, »And who is going to stay [at the camp] tomorrow?«

Then *Màà'jwalahi'*, the hare-man,⁷ said, »I am going to stay first, eh.«

»What is he going to do?« said one, »*Màà'jwalahi'* always likes to fall asleep!«

But *Màà'jwalahi'* replied, »I am just going to stay here; I am going to assess well.«

But the others were [not sure]; they said, »I don't know, because you're a sleepyhead ... Indeed you're going to put yourself there in the garbage; there you're going to sleep and you're not going to see anything that comes around.«

But *Màà'jwalahi'* said, »No, I am not going to sleep! I'm going to [be attentive to] assess well who it is that is eating our roast. Now, the other two men have become mute, they can't speak, [but that is not going to happen with me].«

Well, then the people accepted that *Màà'jwalahi'* would remain [as a sentinel]. And when the others went hunting, *Màà'jwalahi'* went into the garbage and went to sleep.

There he was sleeping until the women came down from the sky. They say that he did not see the women because he was sleeping. And even though the women were making noise, he had slept well.

When the other men returned, they found *Màà'jwalahi'* still sleeping.

⁷ *Màà'jwalahi'* is the European hare (*Lepus europaeus*).

»What a tremendous thing! [He is sleeping!]« said one.

And when they had awakened him, they asked him, »Now, what has happened? And how is it that we are still losing our roasts? What thing is it that you have seen? What was [the appearance of] the people who ate our roast? Were they people or were they animals, what was it?«

Màà'jwalahi' answered, »I did not see them; what a thing, but I did not sleep, and though I looked for them, but I did not see them!«

The others said, »No, well then, how have our roasts been lost then?«

»But look, then, if I have not slept at all,« said *Màà'jwalahi'*. »Why should this happen? I haven't seen anything. No one has come. How could it get lost like that?«

But the others paid no attention even though they had lost the roasts again. »Well,« said one, »You must have fallen asleep ...«

»No, no, no!« said *Màà'jwalahi'*. »I have not slept at all. No, not at all! Me, sure, sometimes I sleep, but when I have to take care of things I don't, I do not sleep. So I have not seen the people that arrived here.«

Well, they stopped arguing and went home. There they started chatting among themselves. They said, »Now yes, I don't know about tomorrow, what can we do tomorrow?«

»Tomorrow he can stay, *Hat'à'*,⁸ the eagle! He can stay!«

Thus, *Hat'à'* promised to stay [as sentinel], and said, »Now I am going to stay. But first of all, let's have a chat,« he said. »I am going to stand over that log that had been burned that time and turned black.«

That log had once been burned, then it had remained black. [Further] he said, »I am going to be on that log, and I am going to appear as part of that log. And people are not going to see me.«

Well, the next day the others went to the bush again. But before they left, *Hat'à'* said, »Now yes, don't you get careless because, if I see the women, or maybe if I see the people, whatever happens, then I'm going to fly and I'm going to scream. And when you hear that I am screaming, you all have to return here to the house!«

»Very good, we know then now,« they said. »*Hat'à'* had already announced everything before (in advance) what that [man] is going to do.«

⁸ *Hat'à'* is a black bird of prey, probably an eagle or a king vulture. [Translator's note: king vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*), cf. vol. 6, p. 181.]

Then the others left. About nine o'clock in the morning *Hat'à'* heard a noise coming from the sky.

»Ah, then, this is how it has been. They were coming from the sky, it seems, the people,« [he said to himself].

Then *Hat'à'* was looking at the women.

»Oh, so many kind, pretty and beautiful women,« he said. He began to desire to have some woman.

The ropes were released from the sky and the women came down. When they stepped on the ground, they said, »You're not going to take away from my husband's mat,« said one. »Well,« said another. »Now, let's see!«

Then they began to eat, calmly. They lifted up the roast and ate, but they ate not only with their mouths above, but also with their mouths below. They say they put more in the mouth below than in the mouth above.

Then *Hat'à'* had been thinking, »What is that thing called? It seems that they have another, bigger mouth.«

Well, they say that they finished eating and that some of them started to weave llica while others started to make thread. Then they rested.

When *Hat'à'* [saw this] he lifted a piece of charcoal that was on the trunk and threw it where the women were. When [the charcoal] hit the leg of one, [she] said, »Ay, ay, ay, what is the matter, who has thrown this at me here?«

Then the women went to where *Hat'à'* was on the log, and looked all around, »Where is the man, where is the man?«

But *Hat'à'* was there [disguised] as a tip of that log, he looked like part of that log. They could not see that he was a person, they say, because he was as black as the log.

So nothing happened, until they stopped looking. They did not find anything. And then the same thing happened again. The third time, however, the women saw that he was moving a little bit.

So they said, »Now, you have to get down!«

But when *Hat'à'* heard that, he wanted to fly away. And he started to shout. So the women took the *jwiitenukw* (>shadow-and-all<) seed and threw it towards *Hat'à'* so that it would go into his mouth [to shut him up]. But he was not careless, he stuck his head under [one] of his wings, so the seed could not do anything to him. And so [he was saved] because his head was under his wing. Nothing hit him.

[He protected himself] until he was far away, [only] then did he start to shout. And while he was shouting, and flying up, he began to cut the ropes that the women used to go up and down. He was cutting them quickly so that they could not go back, so that they would be left without a path.

Now, because of that, they were left on the ground. It was only when this had happened that the eagle began to scream, and he screamed so that Thokwjwaj [noticed] and said to the others, »Ah, it seems that someone has screamed ... Ah, it seems that someone has screamed ...«

But the others began to mock Thokwjwaj: »No, no, you are deaf ... What could it be? It cannot be like that ... You are deaf,« they said. »It cannot be like that.«

[But Thokwjwaj insisted,] »Me, I have heard something, well ...« said Thokwjwaj. »I have heard something, some voice I have heard.«

»No, you lie, uh, I have not heard anything ...« [said another].

»But I have heard something,« said Thokwjwaj.

[So] he just followed. And when *Hat'à'* cried out again, he said: »There it is now! [That is] what I heard!«

[And when the men realized this], they then began to run, all of the group. And, they say that they were all pushing each other [to arrive as the first] ... And the women were on the ground because *Hat'à'* had cut their ropes. So, indeed, the woman had stayed on the ground.

And when the men arrived, they say that each one grabbed a woman. Somebody had two, somebody had three, somebody had one, here. Of all of them, Thokwjwaj came last because when he saw that '*Aalhu*', the iguana, the iguana-man,⁹ who was running [ahead], he went into his cave, and then came out much further ahead. Then, when he saw that, Thokwjwaj went into the pit (hollow) to come out somewhere else.

But when '*Aalhu*' had entered his cave, they say he had come out on the other side quickly. But when Thokwjwaj entered that same hole, the other had already come out earlier. But Thokwjwaj came across a root there, inside that hole. So, he said: »But, I say ... I say, what is it? I do not know why you are like that!« he said. »But, '*Aalhu*', go! Go! Go! Go! Hurry! If you don't go, I will break your tail, right now! Let us hurry! Let us hurry!« he said.

⁹ '*Aalhu*' is the green iguana, the edible lizard of the Chaco (*Iguana iguana*). In local Spanish it is also called »caraguay«, the term used by the narrator.

And they say that [thus it went on] until Thokwjjwaj finally tried to break [the tail of 'Aalhu']. But, as it was a root, he could not break it. So, Thokwjjwaj had to go out the back again. And when he came out, then he decided to run.

»What a thing, what a tremendous thing,« [he was whispering]. And when he had come out of there, he said: »Alas, 'Aalhu' has already gone out before ...«

Then the men had already lifted up [married] the women. Some had three, some two, so they had chosen. They say that, as is the custom of the *Ky'anhooh*, the three-banded armadillo,¹⁰ since he does not run very well, when he came [to the place], there were no more women. But *Hat'à'* said,¹¹ »Now, the women, they already entered in here, into the earth ... Now *Ky'anhooh*, why don't you go dig, here you will see the women!«

»Well, I don't know ...«

So, they say *Ky'anhooh* started digging like this, digging here and there. And all of a sudden he grabbed a woman and pulled out a nice woman. Then the others, they made fun of him and ultimately they took the woman away from him. What a thing!

So *Ky'anhooh* kept digging here, digging there, until he found [another woman]. They say that [when] he found her, he scratched one of her eyes. So he burst her eye, and [she] became like a one-eyed woman. Then the others said, »Fine, then let's just leave her. That one [is going to be] for *Ky'anhooh*.«

So the men married [the women] and all that. That is how it happened, they say.

And they began to take the women to themselves. But *Hat'à'* said to them, »Now you have to be very careful, because I have seen that these women, they did not eat only by the mouth that is above, but they also put it in from below, everything ...¹² I do not know why it is like that ...«

But he told (warned) them that: »Look, guys. Now you have to be very careful, because these women, that we have taken (grabbed), none of us can use¹³ them, because who knows what they can do? Therefore, no one can do that, no one can use them!«

¹⁰ *Ky'anhooh* is the three-banded armadillo, called ›quirquincho‹ in local Spanish (*Tolypeutes matacus*).

¹¹ Here the narrator does not remember the right word and looks for a translation into Spanish: »ha dicho él ... como se llama? el águila ...« [»he said ... what is it called? the eagle ...«].

¹² Here the narrator repeats exactly the mistake of the previous footnote.

¹³ Here, and in the rest of this text, the verb ›use‹ refers to intercourse.

But when they wanted to use the women, then *Hat'à'* said to them, »I don't know ... Now we can make Thokwjwaj start. I think it has to be him ... He is the one we're going to start with!«

But when Thokwjwaj wanted to use a woman, they say the woman had told him, »Thokwjwaj, you have to go deeper inside!«

But then she began to bite him, they say, to [eat] the little balls, to eat everything ... There was nothing left! But since this man is wholly a diviner,¹⁴ then he did not die ...¹⁵ So then, they already knew that the women that they had, those women had their teeth beneath. So we as men, we could not use them because suddenly they were going to hurt us ... So, that is how it happened, they say, and nobody used the women but Thokwjwaj ...

So the men said among themselves, that, »Now yes, what can we do?«¹⁶

Then Thokwjwaj said to them: »Now, nephews; what we are going to do is that I am going to prepare myself like this for going first with the women ...«

And Thokwjwaj had thought that, »I'm going to take a stone [in the place of the male member], and I'm also going to form little balls of stones; those things I am going to form ... It will look like I will have [a member] in the shape of that, but of stone ...«

So yes, he started first. He had to go first with all of the women, starting from the song,¹⁷ all while he used that stone. So, he used the stone and he could use the women. And the women were not afraid, they did not feel any danger, nothing. And when Thokwjwaj used a woman, they say she started biting.

»What ...? How ...?« she would say.

Then, when Thokwjwaj was using the woman, she said,¹⁸ »Now, you have to put it in deeper already!«

¹⁴ From a Western perspective, it means he has supernatural powers (see vol. 7).

¹⁵ Here the narrator repeats himself, that is why the following part has been omitted: »They did not bite. But it is, so it has happened. But, but so he says that he had spoken. Then he said, when he put the woman in like that, he said that she began to bite everything and nothing was left.«

¹⁶ Here the narrator repeats himself, that's why the following part has been omitted: »Already, they already, have gathered the women then I call the Thokwjwaj. He said, »Yes.« So already, they already started to make this form. Make this form, then ...«

¹⁷ The expression »from the song on« means »from the first to the last«. [After this expression the narrator repeats himself, because of this a part has been omitted.]

¹⁸ Here the narrator repeats himself, that's why a part has been omitted.

And he heeded her, and put it further in, but since he had now already formed like [put] stones [in place of his original organs], then she could not do anything. They say that when she suddenly wanted to bite him, they say that the teeth grabbed a stone. And they began to break, all of them, all of them, all of them, until she was left with one, a little one. There was one little one left. They say that all her bottom teeth were broken ...

And I think that's all there was left. Until that Thokwjwaj had used all the women ... Then, finally, the husbands could use their wives, because there was no more danger. Thus indeed, they already had their wives.

And they say that at that time, we as men, we were always sick with the months.¹⁹ We were the ones who had our months, they say. And when one got sick with his month, they say that the man could no longer go out, like the women,²⁰ he could no longer change [places], he had to stay at home.²¹

So now, finally, they all had their wives. Before they had not had them, but now they all had them. That's how these things were. That's how they say it happened. And I think I have reached the end of what I can tell ...

2.5. Thokwjwaj Steals the Jaguar's Fire²²

They say that in the beginning there was no fire. The only one who had fire was the man called *Ha'yàj* (the jaguar-man).²³ And it turns out that there was a man who went to all the places that existed. This man was called Thokwjwaj.

[Once] Thokwjwaj had gone to visit *Ha'yàj* and had found [that he had fire]. And he stood [there beside] his fire. And he thought, [and then] said, »Well, here

¹⁹ The expressions ›months‹ and ›their month‹ refer to menstruation.

²⁰ Until now there is a taboo among the 'Weenhayek that prevents women from leaving the house when they are menstruating.

²¹ Here the narrator repeats himself. That is why the following part has been omitted: »So that, that ... things he says that when he has had one, he gets sick with his month already ...«

²² In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M046. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 10 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

²³ Here he refers to the jaguar (*Panthera onca*), locally called ›tigre‹ in Spanish and *ha'yàj* in 'Weenhayek.

is fire. [But it is] only *Ha'yàj* that has fire. Now, in order that there may be plenty of fire [for more people], I had better steal a firebrand so that there may be more fire. For it is bad when one person alone has fire and then the others have none.«

Therefore, Thokwjwaj sought [to do thus]. But they say that *Ha'yàj* was not inattentive when Thokwjwaj was present. He was not careless because he was afraid that he would remove a brand from his fire.

[And so it was]. Thokwjwaj was thinking of stealing a brand to take somewhere else where there was no fire. So they say that every time *Ha'yàj* looked to the side, thus, [Thokwjwaj sought to steal a brand].

But [once] when *Ha'yàj* looked in another direction,²⁴ suddenly Thokwjwaj picked up a brand and began to run away with that brand.

And when *Ha'yàj* realized it, he remembered Thokwjwaj, then the brand was already gone, and *Ha'yàj* had lost it. Then he said, »Well, it is Thokwjwaj who has picked up this brand. And I have to follow him.«

And they say that *Ha'yàj* began to chase after Thokwjwaj. They say that he ran [intensely], all [the distance] that Thokwjwaj had already run. And soon he was close. But they say that when *Ha'yàj* approached, Thokwjwaj made a fire. And he set fire behind and in front. Thus, they say, the bush was set ablaze, and they say that it burned so much that it covered the entire way.

But Thokwjwaj was going further ahead (while) the fire stayed behind. And he did thus. *Ha'yàj* was pursuing him, but when he came to the fire, he did not know where to cross because the fire blocked the way. And *Ha'yàj* was surely afraid of the fire. And when he turned the other way, they say that he had found more fire, which was further ahead. So, they say that Thokwjwaj was further ahead. He was running and when *Ha'yàj* could pass through the fire, then he was already far away, taking the fire with him.

And then already *Ha'yàj* tried [again] to reach him; he ran [hard], but he could not. When he was close again, they say that Thokwjwaj did the same thing he had done before; he lit a fire and blocked the way, so *Ha'yàj* could not pass. [He tried to] turn around, but the way was well blocked by the fire. It was almost like two fires.

Then *Ha'yàj* said to himself, »Now I am going back to where [my house is]. I am going to just let Thokwjwaj have fire.«

²⁴ The original story says: »he turned his face aside like this«.

Then, they say that Thokwjjwaj, when he arrived at his settlement that he had, showed the people that they now had fire.

»Now we have fire for everyone. The fire has stayed in the bush; the fire has stayed in the logs that were burning like this, going all the way down to the roots that are in the ground. And all the logs that are in the bush have been burned. And the fire has entered even to the earth, where they had their roots.«

Then he said, »Now we have plenty of fire. We are no longer lacking. And then, if someone lacks fire, you just have to know where it is, because the fire is entering all the wood in the bush. Any stick, the fire is there.«

So, they say that one day Thokwjjwaj was going to forage and [at the same time] teach the people how to know which stick has fire.

And he said, »Let us test if fire comes out!«

So they tried it out. They had managed well. And then, they say, they tried to draw fire. And when [a stick] was smoking, they say that Thokwjjwaj was pleased. He said, »Now yes, there is no need to bring fire! There is no need to carry along any form of fire, because [now] we know that in any bush there is plenty of fire.«

Thus he had thought. He was pleased with the fire, because the whole world already had fire. Up to the bush there was fire. Then all that was missing was for [a person] to know which wood has fire. Thus Thokwjjwaj had advised the people.

And then *Ha'yàj* returned to his house. There he was tending his small fire. But the people no longer came [to use] his fire, for they already had their separate fire. So because of Thokwjjwaj, they say, finally all the people had fire. He also knew the fire that was in the bush was on account of Thokwjjwaj lighting a fire there. [All this] was on account of him having stolen the fire [from *Ha'yàj*]. And that was the tale. That's it. The end.

2.20. Thokwjwaj and the Origin of Diseases and Shamanism²⁵

They say that in the beginning there was no sickness. There was no one who got sick. They say that at that time people lived to be very old, because they had no disease.

But they say that one day Thokwjwaj came. And he was teaching the people, saying, »Now we are going to prepare²⁶ a chicha and then we are going to drink!«

And the people obeyed him, and they say that they made a bateón [a large wooden pan] for the aloja.²⁷ [Then] they prepared an aloja. And when the aloja was ripening, they say that they [Thokwjwaj and the people] began to drink together. And when they had drunk, they began to feel a drunkenness. They got drunk, and they didn't know what they were going to do since they were drunk.

So, they say, they finished drinking and later they woke up bad (sick). They say some were with headache, some were with eye pain. Everyone ..., everyone [had something]. And they say that someone had fought and they felt pain in their body where [the other] had hit them. And they could not heal. They say [everyone] was a little sick, like that, weak.

And when one day Thokwjwaj appeared again, he said, »Why do you all [just] look at these people who have their sickness? Now, if you cannot cure them, I will attempt to cure.«

But the people did not think that he was going to [be able to] do like the *hiyaawu'* (shaman). But since Thokwjwaj had his diviner, and also his secret, then he could do like the *hiyaawu'*. And like that, he said thus, »If you all cannot cure someone, then I can cure them.«

And then they say that he was a healer (a *hiyaawu'*).²⁸ He cured those who were drunk; he cured what did not go away. It seems that they had become ill because of what they had drunk. So he began to heal, until they were healed.

²⁵ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M048. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 10 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

²⁶ The original expression is: »we can prepare«.

²⁷ Translator's note: An alcoholic beverage typically made of the fruit of the algarrobo tree.

²⁸ The original text says: »And then they say that there was already a healer.« Logically it is not very clear whether this refers to Thokwjwaj or not. Here, from the context, I have indicated that yes, Thokwjwaj is the first healer.

They were healed and were well again. Then Thokwjwaj said, »Now, there is (another) disease²⁹ which is going to give (attack) someone every time.«

And they say that one day someone got sick.³⁰ He was with pain from the rib, he could not lie down. Then Thokwjwaj said, »Here, this sickness, they say it is the devil who has his arrow; and when he has arrowed someone, they say he is like this; he has pains of the rib and cannot lie down because of the arrow he has.«

And it turns out that the devil had arrowed that person and that is why he was left with rib pains because the arrow was straight in his rib. That's why, when the arrow had grabbed (hit) his rib, he could not move.

Then, when Thokwjwaj had arrived, he said: »Now yes, here is the arrow. Now, how can we cure it?«

And he started sucking. And when he sucked, then it seems like the arrow was short. He sucked until the arrow came out [of the rib] and went into his mouth. And when he threw the arrow out, they say that a splinter of wood appeared, one that was black. Then Thokwjwaj said, »This is an arrow of sickness. And when this arrow hits someone, then one cannot lie down. One cannot sleep either, because this is a piece of stick.«

So the people already knew the disease, that it has its armaments, pieces of sticks that they say are its arrows. And when [one] arrowed someone, then it stayed like that. Then Thokwjwaj said, »It is hardly convenient for me to work like this alone. It would be better if there were also other *hiyawulh* (shamans).« Then people began to [get used to] and like [appreciate] Thokwjwaj's way. And they say that several more men became like *hiyawulh* (shamans) because of Thokwjwaj, who in the olden times [was the only one] who had his healing. Then Thokwjwaj said, »You have to do this for a long time. The whole time you have to do this, heal the sick.«

And they say that afterwards, finally, there were many *hiyawulh* (shamans) to cure the sick. And they also say that every illness, if it was diarrhea, they stopped it for a little bit of caraguata thread.³¹ It costed nothing. And then, if one was sick because of fishing, then one had to give a *hiyaawu'* a net. And thus he

²⁹ Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted.

³⁰ Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted.

³¹ Here the preposition is decisive. It can be »with«, indicating that the caraguata thread is used to cure. However, considering what follows, my interpretation is that the preposition should be »for«, thus indicating that it is payment for curing diarrhea.

could be healed as well. And if it was an illness of the bush, then you had to give him a thread, too, so that he could heal someone. And like this, they always paid the *hiyaawu'*. And it was always ordered that way, that it cost these things.

And if one had a cough, then when the shaman cured it, one had to give him a small necklace. And if it was an ›evil eye‹, then they were paid only with a mirror.

And that's how they had stayed, that's how much it cost. It did not cost a lot of things, seeing [considering] that we were poor. We do not have to respond to (pay) with many things. That is why it had to be this way. A *hiyaawu'* could not charge so much, because he saw that the others had nothing. And so, according to the illness, he did not ask for so much. And in this way the sick were being healed. And so they say that in the first time a *hiyaawu'* (shaman) almost did not earn anything because he was helping the others who had [nothing].

And so I think that was the story I heard at that time. And now, that's it, the end.

2.28. Taapyatsà', Thokwjwaj and the World Fire³²

Now we are telling a story about the fire, but it is no longer the fire that *Taats'i'* and the others called upon.³³ Now, from the beginning they say that there was a thing that they saw [in the sky]. Every night, it seems they were seeing something on a part of the north side. They say it was burning every night and the people did not know what it was.

And there is a story that says that [once] this fire came to where they were.³⁴ They say that someone had mentioned that the fire came from that way. The fire came to the whole world, from corner to corner. And they say that during the time they were waiting [for the fire to come] there was always something like a light there [in the sky]. And it turns out, they say, that one day it was burning

³² In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M224. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 19 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

³³ Here he refers to the bird *taats'i'* (*Furnarius rufus*), or ›hornero‹ in Spanish, who is the protagonist of myths M007 and M106 as ›the man who could not stop laughing‹.

³⁴ Here referring to the myth M105, in which the world perishes by fire.

even closer. And they were amazed, saying, »We don't know ... What thing could it be that is happening now?«

And when the fire was closer, the animals began to appear that were running from the fire. Then when the animals arrived, they say that they were very thirsty, and that when they reached the river, they went to drink water [there].³⁵

Then, they say that *Taapyatsà*'³⁶ was asking questions, asking the animals that were plunging into the water, saying, »Why are you all this thirsty?«

The white lipped peccary's body was almost burned, as the fire had almost gotten him. And he told him, saying, »We have come onwards now and the fire is coming after us. And we do not know where to escape to, because this fire comes from edge to edge, and by force we must go on ahead! So we have come away from this fire and now we have arrived here, weary.«

The people were there waiting for a while. They say that one day the fire arrived. [And in front of it] came all the animals of the wild; the three-banded armadillo, the iguana, the peccary came, and [all] were a little burned. Then *Taapyatsà*' asked, »What is the matter with you, why do so many come?«

[So they answered,] »Well, we have come ahead of the fire, because you know that thing that is glowing there, on the north side, is the fire that comes from corner to corner and we do not know where to escape to. We were forced to come ahead. And now we are here ...«

Then the people were distressed to hear that news. And [later], they say that the animals passed over the river.

[But] the people who lived by the river were with the man who is called Thokwjwaj. He was [visiting] the house of *Taapyatsà*', as well as his family. And it turns out that Thokwjwaj had notified the people who were on the other side of the river, »They say the fire is coming!«

So Thokwjwaj had told the other people. [But] it turned out that the people did not believe it. Some said: »Uh, this Thokwjwaj, he is just a liar! How is a fire going to come ...?« they said.

When Thokwjwaj again returned to *Taapyatsà*'s house, he said, »Now, what shall we do, how can we save our lives?«

³⁵ Here the narrator adds: »They say that there were other people.«

³⁶ *Taapyatsà*' is a small overo bird, protagonist in many tales of the 'Weenhayek but of uncertain scientific classification. [Translator's note: lark-like brushrunner (*Coryphistera alaudina*), cf. vol. 6, pp. 241f.).]

Then *Taapyatsà'* said to him: »I don't know, maybe we can dig a pit, a hole, and then go in there when the fire is coming. When the fire comes, then we would have [a way] to defend (save) our lives!«

Thokwjwaj³⁷ agreed and said, »Yes, yes, let us start digging because the fire is already near!«

And the others were watching when they began to dig.³⁸

Then the animals came; every kind that is in the land came. They came to the river and they kept saying that the fire was coming after them and the people were [even more] frightened. And the people who lived on the other [side of the river] said, »Well, even though we are here, with the river [as protection]; if the fire comes, we are still going to get in there [in the water]. The river is going to defend us, because the river is big and it is also deep. What can it do to us?«

They trusted the river, because it is big. [But] it turns out that *Taapyatsà'* with Thokwjwaj had begun to work on digging a hole. And when the hole was ready they settled in there with their family. Already the fire was near, they were already seeing it, it was burning, pure smoke was coming. Then [Thokwjwaj] said, »It is already near, we can get ready.«

Then *Taapyatsà'* said, »You all must prepare water to take in there, inside the ground where we are!«

And they prepared a few big jars with water, then they put them there, under the earth, where they were going to be. And when the fire was near, then *Taapyatsà'* said, »Now, let us get into that hole!«

And he got in there, they say, with his family. And when they had all entered, then he began to close the door (the entrance). And then he said to Thokwjwaj, »You have to be like a doorman! You watch the door and touch it every time! And if it heats up by the side of the door (entrance), then you have to pour water like this so that it does not get hot!«

And Thokwjwaj agreed and said, »Yes, I am going to be sitting by the side of the door (entrance) guarding it so that it does not get hotter.«

So Thokwjwaj went over there, sitting there with the water pot. And every time (repeatedly) he would touch the ravine with his hands to see if it would get warm. When he felt a little heat, then he would just pour water like this so that it would not get hotter.

³⁷ The narrator (erroneously?) calls the respondent *Taapyatsà'* as well.

³⁸ The original text says: »And others were speaking when they saw the others digging.«

So, they say that this fire was on the earth for about three months. And in those three months, they say that there was nothing in the bush. And the others, who had not prepared themselves, they say that when the fire came, they entered the river. And when the fire reached it, they say that the river was as if it had little water. And the river began to boil, and all the people who had entered there were all burned, [they were] as if boiled. Then there was nowhere else to [take refuge].³⁹

And during those three months, they say that [Thokwjjwaj, *Taapyatsà'* and his family] were inside the ground. They say that there was nothing left [up above]. Only they, who had dug out earth, had stayed alive.

After the three months, they say that little by little they began to come out. Like so, very carefully, because the earth was hot. And, as they had been [in a deep pit], the fire passed them by and as they also had water to wet [the ravine], they had thus not been warmed much.

And afterwards, they tried to come out little by little. But the earth was still very hot. And still the fire was in the tree trunks, because it had entered all the way into the roots of the dry trees ... And when the three months had passed, they say that *Taapyatsà'* came out with Thokwjjwaj. And they looked at the land, [and saw] that there was not a single tree; it was all bare. And then he said, »Now what shall we do, how shall we go out, if there is no shade ...?«

And they looked at the land. The next day, they say that a very heavy rain came and the ground was very cool. So they started to pass through there. And when they saw a sprout, *Taapyatsà'* said, »There is a tree that has sprouted. Now what can we do? I believe that we should tend to this tree.«

And the next day, they say that Thokwjjwaj had begun to tend to that tree.⁴⁰ They say that he started to fix his pimpim,⁴¹ and when it was fixed, then he went there and would play it, every day, above that tree, so that it would grow more. Thus he was healing that tree.

Every day he was playing his pimpim above that tree so that it would grow more,⁴² so that he would have its shade. They say that *Taapyatsà'* suffered with his family, who were inside the earth, because there was no shade out there. So

³⁹ The original expression is »to defend«.

⁴⁰ Here the next sentence has been omitted: »They say that he had to enforce.« The narrator repeats himself.

⁴¹ Translator's note: a drum.

⁴² Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted.

the whole family was inside the earth [all day]. Only at night would they go outside to refresh themselves.

Then, for a while, they say they saw the tree, which was about a quarter,⁴³ like so. They say it was growing a little. And *Taapyatsà'*, as he is small, he tested that tree, because in a month they already had it like that. For a month, they say that he saw that the tree was coming along. It already gave shade and then he put himself under the tree, in the shade, so he was happy to have that shade. Then he said, »Now yes, I will keep playing pimpim all the time above this tree so that it will grow more.« So he kept singing over it until the tree got bigger. Then, when it was a little bit bigger, the whole family went outside. They say they were in the shade. They were happy. Then Thokwjwaj said, »Now what do we do? We cannot find anything here. There is nothing [to eat] here, [the only thing is that] yes, it has rained. [But, still] what can we do?«

[But], one day, they say that they had been looking out over the land. Many things sprouted there that they did not know about. Then Thokwjwaj said, »This tree is called chañar! This tree is called algarrobo! Those trees will serve as our food, [they will be] for us poor people here.«

They say that there were no other people, only that family of *Taapyatsà'* that lived. Then, they say that *Taapyatsà'* did not know what he was going to do with his family, because he had girls and young boys and he did not know what he was going to do with them. Until, finally, as there were no people, then they began to marry among their own siblings.

»[This is what we do] so that the population will grow again,« said *Taapyatsà'*.

Taapyatsà' could do nothing, as there were no more people. What could he do?

Then Thokwjwaj said, »It doesn't matter! The population just will grow out of this family!«

And thus it was so. And Thokwjwaj began to go over that whole land, [and discovered] that there was already bush. And that tree that *Taapyatsà'* was healing, it was already big. It already had shade so they could live there, in the shade. Then the people began to go outside and they say that they put up (built) their

⁴³ Here possibly referring to a »quarter of a ›braza‹« [Translator's note: A historical unit of length similar to the English fathom.] (1/4 of 1.7 meters = about 42.5 cm); or, less likely, a »quarter of an ›ana‹« [Translator's note: A historical unit of length.] (1/4 of 59.38 cm = 14 cm).

huts once more and they were at peace. Then Thokwjjwaj went out to get to know the trees that were growing on the land. And he told the others about them, »Here we have the tasi plant⁴⁴, here we have the algarrobo plant, here we have the chañar plant, here we have the other fruit plants! This is going to be our food, because this is going to give fruit later! We have to take good care of this!« he said.

Then Thokwjjwaj went over (watched) that nothing would happen until the bush had grown more. And after a while, they say that *Taapyatsà*'s family spread out again. The population spread out through that same family. They say that they lived in a small village once more. The people were happy and they saw all the fruits of the bush that were there. They had tasted that they were very sweet, so they were good (good food) for them and that's what people lived on. That is how it happened.

So for all of my time, when I was with my old folks [parents], before, when we used to go out together, when they saw a burned log in the bush, they [always] remembered this story. They would say that the burned log that was there in the forest was from the time when the fire ran through there. They said so. Since then it had remained there in the land, because nobody made fire over there, far away, but [it was from the time when] the fire was burning all the forest. That's what they told me. So I knew the story, that this was what had happened. That's how the old people told it, and I think that's it, the end.

2.43. Thokwjjwaj Cuts the Iguana's Tail⁴⁵

Let's continue telling yet another story about what the same Thokwjjwaj did.

It came to pass that Thokwjjwaj, when he saw 'Aalhu' (the iguana-man),⁴⁶ entering his cave, he then also wanted to do the same. [So] he entered the cave (of

⁴⁴ Translator's note: latexplant (*Araujia odorata*, formerly *Morrenia odorata*), cf. vol. 6, p. 117.

⁴⁵ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M202. The narrator was **Celestino M'ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 16 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁴⁶ This animal is a lizard (*Iguana iguana*), called 'aalhu' in 'Weenhayek and »iguana«, »caravay« or »caraway« in local Spanish. In the Spanish translation, the narrator uses the word

the iguana) and they say that when he had passed to the other side, there was a root that was broken off there.⁴⁷ [He thought that] he had reached 'Aalhu'. So he said, »Now I am going to break the tail!«

But when he grabbed 'Aalhu's tail, he could not pull it off, nor could he pull it up again. So he broke the tail. And when he got outside he said, »Now yes, I have caught the iguana ... At least, I have caught the tail ...«

Then he thought a thing, »Now I am going to do a thing!«

And he began to break the tail of the iguana into pieces. And he thought like this, »Now this piece ...« He began to throw it aside like this. It happened that [the piece] became a lizard. Then he threw another piece down, [and that piece] became like an ututu.⁴⁸ Then he threw another, bigger piece, and then the caiman⁴⁹ was made. All three came out of this iguana tail.

They say that is how it happened. And then he started to do other things. He was thinking of doing things with his powers, [forming] all the little animals that sing when there is a lagoon. [Because] when it rains there [are] always critters that sing, happy [that] there is water.

First Thokwjwaj named the frog. He said, »Let there be frog!«⁵⁰

And they say there was. Then he also remembered the toad. And he said, »Let there be toad!«

Well, then there was. And as I said, he knew how to name all the animals. And then he named the other animals, all the frogs, every kind there was. Then he named other frogs, of which I don't know the name in Spanish, but there were several frogs that were singing when there was water.

So they say that there were already these little animals. And Thokwjwaj said to them, »Now, you must live in the lagoon, all the time! When it does not rain, you have to be there, where the lagoon is. And when it rains, then the lagoon will rise and then you can start singing. And so I think it is going to be good.

»caraway«, something that, in the wording, has been changed again to the local 'Ween-hayek.

⁴⁷ Here the narrator reuses some words again (which have been taken out): »And Thokwjwaj said, »He went away! He's already gone!«

⁴⁸ »Ututu«, called *wooyelaj* in 'Ween-hayek, is the local name for another small, green and white lizard. [Translator's note: spiny lava lizard (*Tropidurus spinulosus*), cf. vol. 6, p. 262.]

⁴⁹ This is the local name for the alligator, or the »spectacled caiman«, in 'Ween-hayek 'aalhutaj, and in Latin *Caiman sclerops*.

⁵⁰ Compare Genesis 1:3, 26.

Then we will see how it works, when the rainy weather comes.« [So] he has done all these things.

They say that afterwards Thokwjwaj began to name all the animals in the wild that are birds.⁵¹ They say he named them all, but I do not know the names in Spanish. But here, I don't know, later we will know the names. But in the 'Weenhayek language it is said that he named them like this: first of all a bird that is called *pàq*; a bird that is called '*ispoolop*'; a bird that is called '*leetse'niwotaj*'; a bird that is called '*ts'oolotaj*'; a bird that is called '*istààjwe*'; a bird called '*piista'*'; a bird called '*puujtah*'; a bird called '*ky'iyo'*', a bird called '*aasnaaj*'; a bird called '>perdiz<' [>partridge<], I think, I know the name of that one. That is, he has named many [birds]. [He has named] '*iniikyu'*', the '>chuña<' [>seriema<], that's how it was called, I know. He named everything this way and so it was that those birds that he has named already have their names. »Very well,« he says, »already, we have solved the matter of everyone having their name.« And they say that among the birds he called each one by name, of [which] we have not heard.

And to all the birds he told [that which they will do]. To the chacarera he said, »When the time comes, you are just going to sing, the time when all the fruits of the land here ripen, [then] you have the right to sing.«

Also to other birds, like '>charata<' [>Chaco chachalaca<], and other birds [of which] I don't know the name [in Spanish], [he gave his instructions]. And then he already said to '*suwaalhqolh*', [which is a bird] that they call '>chorizo borbo<' [>nacunda nighthawk<], and then, he said to him, »Now you, before the mistol ripens, you have to sing. That is your time; and afterwards, when the mistol has matured well, then you can no longer sing, you have to stop, because that is quite forbidden.« That is how he advised it.

Very well, it was done. Then it is well. And they say that afterwards Thokwjwaj was happy because he had thus made all the animals that are in the land. Now this story is also short. That's it, the story is over.

⁵¹ In the text a number of birds are mentioned, in their order of occurrence: *pàq* (creamy-bellied thrush, *Turdus amaurochalinus*); '*ispoolop*' (thrush, solitary cacique, *Cacicus solitarius*); '*leetse'niwotaj*' (shiny cowbird, *Molothrus bonariensis*); '*ts'oolotaj*' (great antshrike, *Taraba major*); '*istààjwe*' (Chaco chachalaca, *Ortalis canicollis*); '*piista'*' (little green bird); '*puujtah*' (small bird); '*ky'iyo'*' (small bird, '>chiyó<?'); '*aasnaaj*' (brushland tinamou, *Nothoprocta cinerascens*); '*lhuuma'yih*' (*tatupá*, partridge); '*iniikyu'*' (seriema) and '*suwaalhqolh*' (nacunda nighthawk, *Podager nacunda*). For more information, see vol. 6.

2.56. Thokwjwaj and the Jaguar Who Ate the Moon⁵²

They say that people were afraid that the jaguar would eat the moon.⁵³ Because that had happened once. They say the jaguar ate the moon – and that is why dawn did not come [anymore]. And that is why the people were afraid.

Then Thokwjwaj said, »Now, what we are going to do, every time when we see that the moon is half red, like this, then we can (we are going to) shout. We can shout, but it may be that the jaguar will [still] eat the moon. Then dawn will still not break ...«

Because they say that at that time people already knew that when the moon dies, when it does not burn anymore, then dawn does not break, [but there will be] total darkness. That is why they feared that thing. So, when they saw that the moon gave very little light, then they said, »Now we have to shout to scare away the jaguar that is eating the moon. Someone can bang on his mortar, without having to grind. Another can beat his dog. Some can yell and someone can shoot [a rifle]. They can do any kind of thing [ruckus] – so then, the jaguar will hear and will run away. It will be afraid of our voices (our noise), and then it will run away. We are going to do it this way every time.«

So, in that time of the ancestors, they followed this thing (this custom). And when they saw the moon like that, then they started to shout like this. »Oh,« they shouted. Others were beating the mortar. Others were hitting the piece of wood where they hit the caraguatá – and with the same club; thus it resounded loudly. Others would yell, and others would hit their dogs so that they would howl well. Or – then all the people would say, »Let us hurry, so that the jaguar runs away, so that there will be no darkness! Because once the moon goes out, then there will be no dawn. What happened at that [primordial] time will happen again.«

So they were afraid in this manner. And Thokwjwaj recommended that they were to do this every time ...

⁵² In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M068. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 15 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia. Note the similarity with M067.

⁵³ Here the narrator begins in the present tense and in the first-person plural. This has been corrected accordingly with the rest of the story. The change is discussed in vol. 7. The protagonist of this narrative is a mystical celestial jaguar.

So, in that time when my grandparents and my parents lived, it was like that every time. So like monkeys, we have been screaming for this thing. We had begun to scream. Others have played a different thing (making noise), and they also grinded like that, without having anything in the mortar, like that, just with the stick (mallet), just like that. So we have seen what has happened.⁵⁴

That is what I have heard. This story is from the old ones, from the time when this thing happened. My grandmother also said it was like that. When that time came, they say it did not dawn, because the moon had been extinguished. They knew this.

So, this is the story. That's all!

3.1. Thokwjwaj Wants to Be like the Ts'iyaa' Hawk⁵⁵

Once again we are going to start talking about the hawk, *Ts'iyaa'*.⁵⁶

Ts'iyaa' was standing on a stick. What happened was he had chosen one leg and had been standing on one leg on the stick. Suddenly Thokwjwaj arrived, who was walking around. And Thokwjwaj said, »How beautiful you are ... But how is it, how can you be like that, how come you have only one leg on the stick? And, you are standing there, quietly, and you do not fall down ...«

»Yes,« he replied. »I am standing on one leg ...«

»But, why?« asked Thokwjwaj. »Why are you like this, on one leg?«

Ts'iyaa' then answered him, »I cut off my leg. I cut off one leg so that I would be like this, having only one leg.«

Then, Thokwjwaj [was amazed at his elegance] and watched with great interest. He thought about how he could do to be (appear) like *Ts'iyaa'*. He said to himself, »How beautiful when one stands on a stick on one foot!«

And they say that he had a [burning] desire to be like *Ts'iyaa'*.

⁵⁴ Here the narrator repeats himself, the repetition has been omitted.

⁵⁵ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M016. The narrator was **Celestino Màànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 8 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁵⁶ This is the mythological hawk-man, well known from this narrative. However, zoological identification is problematic as we have very contradictory information about the species of this bird. One possible suggestion is that it is the roadside hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*).

»Now you yourself have cut off your leg, then I also want to do the same and have only one foot. So how can I do it?«

Then *Ts'iyaa'* said to Thokwjjwaj, »Look, Thokwjjwaj. I had myself be cut by someone, by a countryman. I cut my foot to stay like this. Because I also like to be like that, having only one foot.«

Then, Thokwjjwaj said to him, »Now, you have to do the same as that (the same with me). I also want to have only one foot, just like you.«

Then *Ts'iyaa'* said, »Very well, come over here! But you have to hold on, because we are going to cut off this shin!«

Then he answered, »Yes, I will bear it, [I will endure] to have only one leg. It is [so] pretty when one has only one foot and [and one can still] stand firm on the stick. [Then] it is just as if one had had two feet.«

All right then. They were chatting with each other. *Ts'iyaa'* said, »Well, now we are going to cut you. So you are going to come out in a form like me.«

So *Ts'iyaa'* began to cut. And they say Thokwjjwaj was screaming for a while. They say he had screamed because of the pain he was in. But *Ts'iyaa'* had urged him, saying, »Thokwjjwaj! You have to bear it, because it's not going to go well if you do not hold out!«

So, Thokwjjwaj, by force, had to endure the pain. And when *Ts'iyaa'* had cut off the leg he said, »Now yes, it is cut off!«

Very well. But they say that Thokwjjwaj tried to get up and step on the ground, but he could not. He could not stand like that, on one foot.

»What a thing!« he said. And Thokwjjwaj became sad, »Now what am I going to do?«

Then the bird [had tricked him] saying, »Thokwjjwaj! I am like that no more ... I have two feet ... It is that I had one leg constricted, to make me (appear) as a man who has only one leg. But it was not like that. That is just the way I am. I always have the habit of constricting one leg and standing on one leg on the stick.«

Then Thokwjjwaj thought, »Alas, then it had been nothing more than that he had put it like that. Now, what do I do? I cannot walk ...«

So he thought that there was a healer.⁵⁷ There was an old woman who knew how to cure and fix anything that had happened. So he thought [to go there], walking, carrying his cut off shin.

But Thokwjwaj was falling down every stretch [of the way], like this, and he kept getting up, always suffering. And when the old woman was looking down the road she always came along, then suddenly she saw a man coming like that, limping. Then, when she looked closer it was Thokwjwaj.

And the old woman was astonished, saying, »But why is Thokwjwaj like this? Surely he himself was insisting that he do it ... Surely someone has [helped] him to cut off his leg. Surely! Because Thokwjwaj always does things like this. And also [bad] things [happen] like that because of him.«

Then, when he came to where the old woman was, he said, »Granny,⁵⁸ granny, please! Fix my shin! I want to have two feet ...«

But the old woman replied, »No! I am not going to fix you! But why did it come out like that?«

»But, granny, look here. What happened to me is that he, *Ts'iyaa'*, demanded I cut off my leg. He told me to come there, and we were going to cut off one leg, so that I would have only one leg, just like him.«

»Ah, yes. But surely you yourself demanded that he cut you like that. But why did he listen to you?«

»No, granny. Not I. It was not I who demanded him to cut me, but he himself begged me to cut off my leg.«

»But why?«

»But, granny, I did not tell him anything, nothing about cutting me, but he himself wanted to cut off my leg.«

»But why, then, why are you playing me down? It is you! You yourself are to blame! Why do you have [such] a desire to be like him? That is just the way those birds are. When they want to stand on only one leg, they can. But why are you like that?«

»Yes,« he said. »But I did not say anything ...«

Thokwjwaj was denying everything, they say. But the old woman already knew that he himself was to blame. But he still begged the old woman to fix his

⁵⁷ Here it refers to a big spider with a huge and very strong web. In the 'Weenhayek language it is called *suwaa'lhokwetaj*.

⁵⁸ In the 'Weenhayek language *nootelah* (>grandmother<) means not only grandmother herself, but all the consanguineous women of her generation.

leg. And then, finally, she said, »Okay. Let us fix it. Come here, I am going to fix it!«

So, the old woman put the leg there, in its place, and fixed it. And she put the knee back in place, nice, nice and tight. And she began to spin around the knee. They say she always spun around to heal. And it turns out she had her medicine, like a glue, to cure this. And it healed well, they say. And his shin was straight, in place, just right, just right. Nothing was missing. But Thokwjwaj, inside himself was thinking like this, »My granny is so ugly. She is pot-bellied. She has such a belly and she has such long hands. How ugly this old hag is!«

That's what he was thinking when he saw the old woman spinning around his knee. And [after a while] it was ready. And the old woman said, »Now, you cannot speak ill of me in any way, in any form. Because if you do, it will give you a bad time again.«

»No,« said Thokwjwaj. »Granny, I am not going to do any evil. I am not going to speak ill of you. That is all just fine, granny. Now, thank you granny for fixing me up and for doing me the favor. Now I will go ...«

So Thokwjwaj was going, quietly, with his [fixed] leg. But when he had arrived there, when he had walked a distance, they say that he began to shout, »Granny! Granny! You're ugly! You're fat! And ... and you have long, ugly hands! What an ugly old hag!« he was shouting.

But the old woman was attentive, listening to what he was saying. She heard everything, because he had not gotten far yet. Then, the old woman, thought to herself thus, »Now, Thokwjwaj, I want your shin to come out again!«

And since the old woman is like *hiyaawu*,⁵⁹ she can use powers, and then what she says is true (everything is made manifest).

And it happened that when Thokwjwaj got further, he found a branch across the road. And they say that he wanted to cross over to the other side, lifting his foot like this [to do so]. Then suddenly, when he wanted to lift his foot, it fell down on the other side. And he could not pass without falling. And Thokwjwaj thought, »But why is it like this? Then my grandmother did not fix me up right. What an old, potbellied, ugly hag!«

Thus he spoke, he spoke ill of the old woman. »This old woman, who is potbellied, who did not fix me up well! This old woman, with her very long hands,

⁵⁹ The word *hiyaawu* denotes the shaman, the religious specialist of the 'Weenhayek.

how ugly this old woman is! Now I have to go again [to her] that she fixes me well ... Why didn't she fix me up well? Ugly old hag, what a fatty!«

And they say that he went again, carrying his foot, to the old woman's house. And they say that when the old woman looked down the road, she saw that a man came again by that way, a lame man. And when she kept looking, she saw that it was Thokwjwaj, who had come there again. And she did not want to receive him, for she was angry with him, very angry.

But Thokwjwaj said, »Granny, I am back. But why didn't you fix me well, grandmother?«

She did not answer anything, she did not say anything. [After a while she said,] »You are a rascal,« she said. »You are a rascal. Why did you bad-mouth me? Why did you mistreat me? Why did you say those words to me? Now I am not going to do anything for you. Now, just go away!«

»No, granny, I did not say anything, no, I do not know. But what? Yeah I did not bad-mouth you at all ...«

»Then, why are you like this? I told you that if you spoke ill of me, suddenly something will happen to you ... I told you so, just now. So, why were you bad-mouthing me?«

»No,« he said, »granny. You are to blame, because you had not fixed me right. You had not put [the leg] properly in place. That is why it came out. It was not my fault.«

»Yes,« said the old woman. »It is your fault! Why did you bad-mouth me? Now I am not going to help you. Just go away like that!«

But Thokwjwaj demanded of her, »Granny, please fix me so I can leave now!«

And then, finally, it seems like the old woman got bored with him and said, »Now yes, I'm going to fix you, but do not mistreat me like that anymore! Don't you go bad-mouthing anymore, because next time I am not going to fix anything for you!«

So, the old woman began to fix his leg. And she put [joined the parts] just as he wanted. She did not put them on like the first time, when she fixed them well.⁶⁰ But it gripped well, and it had its bend, and Thokwjwaj was already satisfied, for he had his leg.

»Now it is done,« said the old woman. »Now go and mistreat me now, go and speak ill of me ...«

⁶⁰ Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted.

»No, granny. I'm not going to bad-mouth you. I have not bad-mouthed you at all, just that you did not fix my shin properly.«

»Yes, sure, it is fine. Now you are going to be fine ...«

But now the knee was not a straight [and smooth] bend, as it was the first time, but this time its knot was a little crooked [since the old woman had added something (the kneecap) on top] on account of him having bad-mouthed the old woman.

But still Thokwjjwaj was content with the shin (knee) he already had. It was a little crooked, wasn't it, but he could walk quite satisfactorily.

And just like that, Thokwjjwaj said, »Now, I am fine. Now, I'm not going to speak ill of my granny anymore, because I have to go.«

Then they say that he was walking far away, and when he had arrived further, far away from his granny, then he started to scream again, »Granny, big-bellied granny! Ugly old hag! The old hag has her long hands and her belly of shit! Ugly old hag!« he said.

But [this time] nothing happened to him. He went walking quietly, because the old woman did not hear anything. Thus he passed by. Well, now he had his shin on again, although it was not like before, a little oblong like that ... But just like that, he was happy, he was fine. And he kept walking.

3.16. Thokwjjwaj and the Singing Competition⁶¹

And when Thokwjjwaj was alive once more, he began to wander around the world [again]. Once more he began to walk around the earth. Then he said, »All-right, let us see!«

And they say that there were many young women [that enticed Thokwjjwaj and the other men], many girls. Then they said that the [man-]birds began to gather, to congregate [to attract the attention of the young women]. And they said, »Now we will sing to see who of us has the most beautiful song.«

And they say that the bird *pàq* wanted to start, »Yes, I can sing like this ...«

⁶¹ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M119. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 19 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

But then Thokwjwaj said, »I also want to sing, just with you, in order to have myself a woman ...«

And the women were in agreement, they say. The girls had said that, »He who has two songs will have two women. He who has three songs will receive three women. He who has one, one. He who has two, two. He who has four, four. So it will be.«

So the younglings attempted to sing. First *pàq*, the ›chacarera‹⁶² sang. And he had two, three songs. So he indeed received three women. And afterwards *'ispoolop* sang, the one they also call ›tordo‹ [›thrush‹].⁶³ He only had one song. So he received one woman.

Thereafter, *'istààjwe'*, the ›charata‹⁶⁴ sang. He had only sung once. So he received one woman. And afterwards, other birds also sang and only had one song, so that they always received one woman.

And it happened that [when they got to] Thokwjwaj, he also played his pimpim, »I also know how to play pimpim. I will do that now as well ...«

So Thokwjwaj was playing his pimpim and while he was playing he said, »Oh, I also have a song ...«

But Thokwjwaj's song was not so nice. And it turns out that *Hoowanaj*, the ›gualacate‹,⁶⁵ [who also wanted to sing,] did not have a nice song either. So the women did not want them. The women moved far away, saying, »What a disgrace of a song [of Thokwjwaj]! Let us distance ourselves ... I do not want to listen to that song anymore! It is no good! He does not know how to sing. And also that *Hoowanaj*, what a disgraceful song! He does not sing well! Now I do not want to hear anything [from them]. Let's go far away!«

Then they went to another place. The girls had already received their husbands and went to another place. And the mothers of the girls who had married the birds who had good songs, they had then stayed with Thokwjwaj. One said, »I will not say anything concerning your song, but I do want to do something with you, I want to marry [you]. I want to make you my husband.«

And Thokwjwaj said, »Well, there is no problem. We can do it.«

⁶² Translator's note: creamy-bellied thrush (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), cf. vol. 6, p. 235.

⁶³ Translator's note: cf. vol. 6, pp. 223f.

⁶⁴ Translator's note: Chaco chachalaca (*Ortalis canicollis*), cf. vol. 6, p. 189.

⁶⁵ Translator's note: big hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus villosus*), cf. vol. 6, pp. 157f.

So Thokwjjwaj stayed with that woman. And the other one, *Hoowanaj*, he also stayed with that old woman. Well, she was not that old, very old, she could still have another son.

And when Thokwjjwaj had lived with her for a while, they say that Thokwjjwaj's wife was pregnant. And they say that one day the boy was born. Then Thokwjjwaj's wife said, »Thokwjjwaj. This is your son! Take your son, hold him for a little while!«

[But he] replied, »No, do not tell me ›my son‹ ... I am ashamed to say ›my son‹. I, for my part, can say: ›He is my brother‹ ... I do not want to have a son like that, but I will call him ›my brother‹.«

Then the woman said, »I cannot say that, because he is your son. This is your son! I cannot speak like this. [You too] can say ›my son‹.« Then he began to deny it, and said, »No! I cannot treat him like that, as my son. I will call him ›my brother‹.«

And it is true that Thokwjjwaj called him his ›brother‹. He did not want to say his son. Then finally he said, »I have to get away, because this is not my son ...«

Then they say that, because of this man's affair, because of him and this denial, they say that until now this problem just continues. There are some who do not want to acknowledge their children, but say, »This is not my child!« This is because Thokwjjwaj had refused first, they say. People put the blame on him. From the beginning, they say, he had denied that it was his child. And now it seems that people come out just the same. That some people do not want to acknowledge their children.

Sometimes they respond when the woman says »This is your child« that »No, it is not my child! I do not recognize the boy. That must be another man's.« That is how they always deny it, every time.

So that had happened with Thokwjjwaj. So he called his son ›brother‹. And the woman did not like it. And then, finally, the boy did not know who his father was. But his father, indeed, was Thokwjjwaj, though he denied it. Then they say the woman at last said: »Well, so far ... I cannot demand any more ...«

Thus we have come to the end of this story.

4.3. 'Ahuutsaj Steals Fish from the Heron'⁶⁶

They say that one day the heron *Qalaaq*⁶⁷ was fishing with his friend 'Ahuutsaj.⁶⁸ And this man 'Ahuutsaj liked to hang out with the heron because the heron was a good fisherman. And when the heron took a fish, he would throw it to the shore and when he was a little careless, 'Ahuutsaj, who was following behind, would take one fish at a time, until he had gathered enough.

The time came when they were going home, and they had gathered enough fish. They already had enough for a load. And *Tseetwo*',⁶⁹ saw that 'Ahuutsaj was bringing in a lot of fish. And this *Tseetwo*' had a daughter, and thought thus, »Well, [it seems that] this man, 'Ahuutsaj, is a very good fisherman ...«

But it turns out that it was not he himself who was catching the fish, but it was the fish from the heron that he was stealing, every time it threw them to the shore.

But suddenly one day *Tseetwo*' said that he wanted his daughter to marry 'Ahuutsaj, as he had seen that this man brought in a lot of fish. Every time he brought a good load of fish. So *Tseetwo*' agreed with his daughter that she should marry 'Ahuutsaj, seeing that he was a good fisherman.

And 'Ahuutsaj wed the girl and kept following the heron. So every time the heron would go fishing, he would follow after him to get fish too. But the heron did not give them away, rather 'Ahuutsaj would steal the fish from him. But every evening, they say that they came back from the river loaded with fish. And they say that *Tseetwo*' was very happy because he had a son-in-law who knew how to fish.

But they say that one day the heron caught 'Ahuutsaj, he had seen that he was stealing his fish. Then he said, in front of 'Ahuutsaj, »You are a rascal who

⁶⁶ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M063. The narrator was **Celestino M'ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 13 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁶⁷ Here it refers to the cocoi heron, also called ›garza gris sudamericana‹ [›grey South-American heron‹], in 'Weenhayek *qalaaq*, and in Latin *Ardea cocoi*.

⁶⁸ Here we find the mythological figure 'Ahuutsetajwaj in a slightly different form. In this costume, he is called 'Ahuutsaj, just like the ›carancho‹ bird (crested caracara, *Polyborus plancus*) which has as a characteristic that it spends a lot of time on the river bank, especially in the fishing season, and likes to steal a fish or parts of a fish.

⁶⁹ Here it refers to the black vulture, in local Spanish, ›cuervo‹ or ›buitre negro‹, in 'Weenhayek *tseetwo*', and in Latin *Coragyps atratus*.

steals my fish! Now if you do not know how to fish, then I am going to take your place! I am going to marry your wife, because you do not know how to fish! I am a fisherman!«

So the heron was very angry with 'Ahuutsaj, but he answered, saying, »No, I have not robbed you! And why did you suspect me? You do not know what is going on ...«

Then the heron said, »Yes, but I have seen you when you stole my fish! Every time you have done so! All the times you have walked with me you have done so! No wonder your missus does not fail to eat fish every day«

And then they began to argue, and the argument got loud ... But 'Ahuutsaj said, »No, I have not robbed you, but I have taken [that fish] myself!«

And all at once the heron became angry with 'Ahuutsaj. They say that it suddenly pecked 'Ahuutsaj, and they say that the heron's beak, being long, damaged 'Ahuutsaj's body. But the story goes that his beak was a knife. And the heron began to axe (peck) the head of 'Ahuutsaj. And blood began to drip all over his face. So then, until now the caracara has a well-painted face, because of the blood that dripped [from the heron's peck]. And all the ancients said that it was his coloration, but it turns out that it was his blood.

So 'Ahuutsaj stayed over there, where the heron knew how to fish. But the heron fled, because of the shame that he had killed 'Ahuutsaj. So he did not fish where he belonged but went somewhere else to fish. Only 'Ahuutsaj stayed there, who was left screaming, because he was with his wound.

Now when *Tseetwo*' was missing his son-in-law, they say that he went looking for him, bordering the river and, as if all of a sudden, he arrived at where the heron knew to fish. Then he heard the one who was shouting and crying. So *Tseetwo*' said, »Now it seems that the heron has hurt my son-in-law, or killed him!«

And when he arrived to where his son-in-law was, his son-in-law said to him, »Over here! My father-in-law, here! I think the heron has hurt me because I have caught a lot of fish ... He has taken my fish ... I have caught so much fish and he, it seems that he is stealing my fish!«

And of course 'Ahuutsaj had caught nothing. That is what he had said, just in front of his father-in-law. The heron was very angry that he had not caught anything, but he still blamed him.

So *Tseetwo*' went to ask the heron, who was in a place. And he answered at once, saying, »Sure, I have axed that man, and do you know why? On account of him going about and stealing my fish.«

»Ah,« said *Tseetwo*'. »Now the other one says the same thing ...«

So they were blaming each other, like that. But then the heron also said, »Now, if 'Ahuutsaj dies, I want to marry your daughter!«

»Well,« said *Tseetwo*', »as you wish ...«

A few days passed, they say, and 'Ahuutsaj died. And the heron took 'Ahuutsaj's wife from him and began to live with *Tseetwo*'. And he [and his daughter] lived with the heron because he was a good fisherman. So they ate fish every day.

And one day they say that [the heron and *Tseetwo*'s daughter] had young, or a chick. They say that they had put up a house, that they had made their house, in order to raise their offspring or their chicks. The story says that it was their ›house‹, and then, further on, it says that it had been ›their nest‹.

Now the caracaras, [the relatives of 'Ahuutsaj], had become angry with [what the heron had done]. So when the heron was going to fish, and the chicks had been left [in the nest], then the caracaras arrived and said: »Now, amongst ourselves, we are going to enjoy [his chicks] because of the heron having killed our countryman. When the heron has withdrawn a little, we can destroy everything [his nest] and kill all his chicks, so that we can get even for everything he has done to us!«

So, amongst themselves, they were spying. And when the heron left the nest to go fishing, then they struck the nest and took his young out and took them home to eat. And they ate all those chicks.

And when the heron came home, he had lost his kids.

»I don't know ... What happened? What happened to my children?«

But one day he learned that the caracaras had eaten them. And the heron was sad. And they say that this is how it happened, and the heron continued fishing, but they say that he could never again raise children, because the caracaras would not let him, and because he could not be in the house all day [to watch over a child], because he was going fishing.

That was the story of what had happened with these things. So this is the story that I have heard from the old ones, but now, this is just as far as I have heard. The end!

4.6. 'Ahuutsetajwaj and the Man »Iron-Forehead«⁷⁰

And now, the next day, again they say that 'Ahuutsetajwaj had played his pim-pim. Then [in the vision] he had seen a man whose name was Iron-Forehead. And then he said, »There is a man on the road. He pursues the people who go visiting that way, and who pass that way. Many have gone to visit, but have not arrived where they wanted to go, because of him. And the man is called Iron-Forehead.«

So, the next day, they say that 'Ahuutsetajwaj went to meet that man. It came to pass that he arrived there, at Iron-Forehead's house, in the afternoon, at about six o'clock in the evening.

Suddenly Iron-Forehead was looking this way, and he saw a boy coming. He did not see 'Ahuutsetajwaj as an old man, for he still looked like a boy. And 'Ahuutsetajwaj greeted him, saying, »Well, it is already late, I would like to stay here. I cannot go along the road there alone [when the sun sets]«

»Alright,« said Iron-Forehead. »Yes, grandson, you can stay with me. And I also think you can stay with me for a few days like this, at least one day. And I also think that tomorrow you can go with me to forage and we can go looking for hives out there ...«

And, so they say that 'Ahuutsetajwaj was pleased and replied, »Yes, I can stay here ...«

So, he stayed. And they say that the next day the old man, Iron-Forehead, told him, »Well, grandson, now we are going to get ready to go to the countryside, to forage.«

And they say that they went to forage. And when they had arrived at the place where the old man knew how to go to forage, he said to 'Ahuutsetajwaj, »Now, in this place there is honey that we are going to search for.«

And they say that he at once had found [a nest of] honey. Then he said, »Be aware, grandson, that here we have honey! Here we are going to take it!«

But Iron-Forehead had a thing that was like a bar of iron, a thing to throw where the honey [bees] were. So, surely, I can say that it was like [a club] but it was not made of wood, it was made of iron.

⁷⁰ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M002. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 6 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

Then, Iron-Forehead said to 'Ahuutsetajwaj, »Now, you have to go onwards to watch out for my club, so that it will not get lost!«

So 'Ahuutsetajwaj went ahead, looking around. But what happened was that that iron, when he threw it upwards, it turned out like this iron came chasing the helper where he was.

But since 'Ahuutsetajwaj has his secret, he already knew what was going to happen. And he knew how to defend himself. And when he saw that the iron was coming through the air, chasing him, then he went behind a tree. He was standing against the trunk of the tree. And so the iron hit (found) the same trunk. It did not find 'Ahuutsetajwaj.

So he picked up the old man's iron, handed it to him, saying, »Grandfather, here is your iron. Nothing has happened. [It has not been lost].«

»Very good, grandson.« He was pleased because 'Ahuutsetajwaj helped him. Then he said, »Now, go over there again! And, make sure that you do not lose the iron!«

Well, he went that way again, waiting. And when Iron-Forehead threw his iron again, what happened was that 'Ahuutsetajwaj tricked him. He pretended that the iron had hit him and he shouted, crying, »Caaaaa! Caaaa! Caaaa!« he said.

Then Iron-Forehead said: »Ay, it seems that the iron hit my honey ... Poor guy!« he said.

But after a while 'Ahuutsetajwaj got up and again went to give the iron to the old man. And this one said, »So, what happened to you? Why did you cry?«

»Well, the iron almost hit me!« he said.

Well, it seems that they overturned [a nest of] bees [but that Iron-Forehead could not kill 'Ahuutsetajwaj]. Then at last he [got tired], called 'Ahuutsetajwaj and said, »Well, now yes! Come here grandson!«

And he handed him his iron and said, »Take this, let us see ... And, why not grandson, why don't you hit me here on my forehead? Now, you have to hit me here, on my forehead!«

But 'Ahuutsetajwaj knew where his death lay. So he did not hit him directly on his forehead, but hit him below. And he hit him right on his nose. So they say that the iron crushed his nose and broke it to pieces. And Iron-Forehead fell down and died.

And they say that when the old man had died, 'Ahuutsetajwaj went home again, taking the old man's iron with him. And he said to the people, »Now, the way is clear!«

And then his neighbors saw the bar that he had brought, and that it was of pure iron. And 'Ahuutsetajwaj explained to them, »You all, look, this is what was dangerous. This is what had killed those who had lost their way.«

And the people were pleased, they say.

»Now yes, the way is clear. There is no more danger. We can visit anywhere ...«

4.12. 'Ahuutsetajwaj and the Mother of the Rainbow⁷¹

They say that there was a woman there in a place. And they say that this woman was kind. Everybody loved her because the girl was very pretty and kind. And the people who were visiting that town, they always loved that woman.

But this youngling had been the mother of *Lawoo'*, (the Rainbow Monster). And it turns out that when *Lawoo'* was visiting his mother, nobody realized anything. It looked like she did not have anything. And that is why some people did not believe it when others said that this was something she had ...

And then one day they say that 'Ahuutsetajwaj, when he was there playing his *pimpim*, they say that after a while his brother arrived, and asked him, »How are you, brother?«

Then 'Ahuutsetajwaj answered, saying, »Brother, I am here ... It seems that there is something over there ... I do not know very well, but I think I will go tomorrow to where it is.«

So, they say that the next day 'Ahuutsetajwaj went to the place where that woman lived. And when he came to that little village, they say that there was a girl who was looking at him when he came.

⁷¹ In the original collection recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M226. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 8 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia. This version has been completed with data from another version of this myth, the narration classification number M012, recorded in the same place and on the same day. This version is more detailed in the part of the battle between the protagonist and the Rainbow.

Then 'Ahuutsetajwaj thought, »Ah, that's the woman that people say is *Lawoo*'s mother ...«

Then, when he had arrived he thought, »Now I'm going to go straight there to the girl's house. I am going to visit her parents.«

But there were other people there, watching. And one woman said, »But why is 'Ahuutsetajwaj coming here? He is not going to live anymore, because those people, when they have visitors, then, on account of their daughter, it always happens that they do ill to anyone ...«

And people gathered around the house where the girl's parents were. And when they saw what was happening, a woman said, »But why is 'Ahuutsetajwaj coming here? He must know, then, that there is danger here. Now he is not going to return to his house again!«

And the others said, »Go and tell him to leave at once, and not to sleep here, but to leave at once! He has to leave this very day!«

But another said, »Well, what is to be done?«

And they say that one went there to chat with 'Ahuutsetajwaj, saying, »You can (should) get out of here now! Do you not know that there is danger here?«

But 'Ahuutsetajwaj did not heed him, and said, »I do not mind being killed, then, I am not like the others. I do not care if they do that to me ... That is why I have come to seek out this thing, so that they kill me.«

That is what he had said. And then the others said, »Let him go, he does not want to ... Just let him go ...«

Now, at the hour to sleep, they say that the girl came to 'Ahuutsetajwaj and said to him, »'Ahuutsetajwaj, you can sleep with me ... [It seems that] I am going to fall in love with you ...«

»Alright,« said 'Ahuutsetajwaj, »no problem. I can be with you and have you as my wife. Very well!« He said so directly.

»I love you!« said the girl. »Uh! I love you very much!«

Then 'Ahuutsetajwaj answered, »Yes, I love you too, I love you very much ...« So they were there [together]. And when they went to bed, at night, they say that he slept with her.

And in the morning, when they had gotten up, the girl said to him, »Now we can go forage, looking for something we lack.«

Then they got ready to go into the forest. But 'Ahuutsetajwaj knew what was going to happen. And when they had gone a little further, the woman said to him, »Go ahead and I will stay here to dispose (defecate).«

Well, 'Ahuutsetajwaj already knew from his powers that she had always done this like so, every time she did it like this, in this manner [when she killed the visitors].

But they say that she had stayed and he went ahead. And she said, »I will catch up with you! Just go on ahead! Don't worry, because I am going to catch up with you!«

And 'Ahuutsetajwaj did as the woman had asked. He went onward. But then all of a sudden he went back, turning like this. He walked straight at first and then turned around like this, and crossed over to the other side, and then came to where the woman was, [peeping].

And when he had returned to where the woman was, she was still sitting. And when he was looking at her, they say he saw something coming out [of her vagina], and it wasn't just any old creature, but it was *Lawoo'*, the rainbow. And so 'Ahuutsetajwaj thought, »Ah, that is how it has been!«

And he was there, watching, while *Lawoo'* was still coming out of his mother and was coming down like that, [winding]. And when he had completely come out, then the girl said to him, »Son, go on to catch up with that man who was going ahead! Just go catch up with him! You have to eat that man!«

And then her son went to catch up with the man who had gone ahead. But they did not know that the man was right behind them. And when some time had passed, [and *Lawoo'* had gone] that way, then 'Ahuutsetajwaj came out and hit the girl with his club. He killed her, clubbing her over the head. Twice he hit her and the girl already died.

And then he left, running away. And he left in a hurry, bolting off. And when the beast had found his footprint, then it sniffed out where he had gone. Then, once more, he passed by the location of his mother. And when he got there he found her dead. And he tried to go in [to his mother] again, but it was in vain. Then he realized that she had died.

»What a thing!« he said, »Now I no longer have a mother!«

And then they say that he tried to follow 'Ahuutsetajwaj. He already smelled his tracks, and felt where he had gone. And then it followed and followed his track, even further. Then when he had arrived further onward, he began to blow hard. And then he blew as if he was the wind coming on hard.

And suddenly 'Ahuutsetajwaj heard that something was coming down the path. And he knew what it was, »There he comes! Now the man, *Lawoo'* is

coming! He seems to be coming to catch up with me. And it seems that he is very angry.«⁷²

And 'Ahuutsetajwaj was frightened, »Now, what do I do? I am so tired ... Now I am going to die!«

And suddenly there came a wind that blew very hard, that made trees fall down. And this wind already made him go back when he wanted to walk forward. But he kept walking until *Lawoo'* had come very close. And it happened that when *Lawoo'* was coming, getting closer, 'Ahuutsetajwaj could no longer bolt off, because he was very tired.

Then 'Ahuutsetajwaj remembered the palm leaves he knew how to use for his crown and neck. [This time] he had put palm leaves all over his body, had tied them to his arms, around his neck and then on his head. He had made something like a crown there. On his feet he had also put some leaves. Then, he said, »Now, I believe this thing is going to defend me ...«

And it turns out that when the Rainbow was approaching, they say that 'Ahuutsetajwaj took off a leaf, and threw it down. Then a palm tree was formed there. And he grabbed the palm and then the palm [began to grow] and it had risen and had become a tall tree. And he stayed up there in the palm, where its leaves are. So, he stayed there. And when the wind was blowing hard, they say he did not fall. He was holding on tight up there. But when *Lawoo'* came, they say he started to climb that palm tree until he got close to where 'Ahuutsetajwaj was.

But when 'Ahuutsetajwaj saw that he was very close he started to get down. He got down and again bolted off. And by the time *Lawoo'* had come down from the palm, they say he had already run a distance. And when he had come down, then 'Ahuutsetajwaj was far away again.

And again he had to run to catch up with 'Ahuutsetajwaj. But he could not. When he was getting close again then 'Ahuutsetajwaj said, »Now yes, I can do as I did a moment ago ...«

Then he took off another palm collar and threw it down to form another palm tree, and again he went up. And he was up there, there on the top of the palm tree. And when the wind came, it began to shake again. 'Ahuutsetajwaj almost fell every time, but he did not fall. And *Lawoo'* was getting closer and closer.

⁷² Here begins the uncertainty of the M012 version.

But it turns out that 'Ahuutsetajwaj was watching, so when *Lawoo*' was close again, then he went down again. And they say that they were fighting for a while, until there remained one last thing left that 'Ahuutsetajwaj had to defend his life with. He had only his palm crown left. It was the last thing he had. Then he said, »Now yes, this is it ... It looks like I am going to die. Because now I have no more palms to defend myself with. So now, I can only stay like this ...«

Then, when *Lawoo*' approached again, he took off his crown, threw some leaves and climbed [upon the palm that was rising]. Now he could not run anymore. And they say that suddenly *Lawoo*' came, he came winding like a viper. And he had smelled that 'Ahuutsetajwaj was over there, up above. So he also began to climb that palm tree. And he would climb up until he got close to 'Ahuutsetajwaj, there on the crown of the palm, to begin to take revenge.

Then 'Ahuutsetajwaj said, »This far! I am ready, for already *Lawoo*' is going to kill me! Why did I kill his mother ...?«

Only a little further, and *Lawoo*' would reach 'Ahuutsetajwaj. But he was up there, waiting for him. And he said, »Now, this is the last leaf I have ...!«

And when *Lawoo*' reached him, they say that 'Ahuutsetajwaj with his powers, with his power, had said that a lagoon will form where a palm tree was. And [when he threw the last palm leaf], a palm was formed like this, in the middle of a lagoon. And they say that just then *Lawoo*' had become tired and when he got there, to the last palm, the last one, then he said, »Here yes, here I am going to be ... I am not going to leave anymore.«

Then, 'Ahuutsetajwaj could go out calmly and *Lawoo*' stayed there in the last palm of the lagoon. Then 'Ahuutsetajwaj went home.

And the ancients say that until now *Lawoo*' does not know where he is going to live. They say that he used to have a mother, who was a person, but that he no longer has one.

**Vol. 9:
A Cultural Treasury: The Oral Literature**

5.1. 'Eeteksayhtaj Delivers the Dogs to the 'Weenhayek⁷³

Long ago there was a man who lived alone out there in the bush. He was without others to accompany him, only he lived in such a place. So the people named this man 'Eeteksayhtaj,⁷⁴ the ›keeper of the bush‹.⁷⁵ He had no wife, he had nothing. Only he was there in a place to raise [the] animals that are in the wild, because they say that all of them were attached to him, because he was the keeper, they say. It is not that he [just] owned [them], but that they were his own animals.

So, he began to gather all the animals that were in the wild and keep them in the house. And they say that this man lived like that, no. His body had not been quite whole, like our human body. So, the people say, this was the special keeper of the bush. He lived alone there.

They say that he began to gather all the animals that were in the wild. He had the 'Aawutsaj (collared peccary, *Tayassu tajacu*), he had the 'amootaj (Chacoan peccary, *Catagonus wagneri*) and also the niitsaj (Tayassu/white-lipped peccary, *Tayassu pecari*). He also had the tsoo'nah (brocket, *Mazama gouazoubira*), and ky'anhooh (three-banded armadillo, *Tolypeutes matacus*), 'Aalhu' (green iguana, *Iguana iguana*); of all [kinds] he had and so, all animals that were in the wild. They say he had many animals; at least [all] the pigs, like someone who raises pigs in the house here. He had a lot of them. Every morning the pigs and all [the other] animals showed up [at his house, before going] to the wild, to the forest.

⁷³ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M049. The narrator was **Celestino M à ù n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 10 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁷⁴ 'Eeteksayhtaj has been called this way because of his extraordinary hair, similar to a lichen of the trees of the Chaco forest. Etymologically 'eetek derives from *lhetek* which is ›head‹; and *sayhtaj* which means ›lichen‹. The 'Weenhayek say that ›his hair looks like garbage‹.

⁷⁵ 'Eeteksayhtaj is one of the ›Keepers of the Bush‹ or ›Keepers of Nature‹ (an anthropomorphic spirit with responsibility for an area of nature), who have a special importance in the hunter-gatherer life of the 'Weenhayek. See vol. 10.

Then they say that the day came when the animals were out there, [where they usually] were. And they no longer returned to where their keeper was. Then the man lost his animals. Some had not come there, some came there, but some did not come to him.

Then he said, »Now what will have happened to my animals?« For they say that no man but him could hunt those animals, because they had their keeper. The animals were not loose out there in the wild, but were always with him, their keeper. So the people still did not know that those animals were for eating.

Then he suddenly lost them. It seems that his animals had stayed in the wild, and did not return to their keeper. Then he said, »Now, what do I do? It seems that my animals are wandering in the wild, and are no longer coming back here, to my house.«

Thus he thought. He knew that in the wild, [sometimes] one sees the animals when they are in a place [where there is] some wild fruit. That is why they had not yet returned to their owner, he thought.

»Now, what do I do? My animals are already finishing and staying over there. They are no longer coming back to the house.«

So he said, »But I am going to do something now.«

He began to think, saying, »Now, how can I catch my animals when there is no way? And they must be surly since they are in the wild.«

Then he said, »Now, what I'm going to do to be able to catch them is I'm going to raise a dog first, eh. I'm going to raise a dog first, and then with the dog I'm going to catch them.«

Thus he carried out his idea, and he raised a [pair of] dogs. And when he saw the dogs, then he raised a male and a female, and [chose them] to have in the house. And he began to raise [the dogs] until they were grown.

When they had been raised, then he began to test the dogs, to take them to the wild. So, it seems that the dogs were experts (skilled) in [searching for] those animals.

Then, when they had gone a stretch, they say they had run into a peccary. And the dogs had pummeled it and caught it. And they say that the keeper began to butcher it, saying, »Now yes, I am all right. Now I can go around with the dog and catch any animal that has been left in the bush.«

And so it was. [When] he arrived at the house, they say he was fine.

»Now I've got it,« he said.

And they say that all the people were admiring him, saying, »Now, we do not know what to do, since the owner of the bush said that each one should have his [own] dog to go and catch the animals of the field. [It seems that] he himself [is] going to raise them.«

Then, they say that one day '*Eeteksayhtaj* had the offspring [puppies] of the dog. Then, he was waiting for more [dogs] to be bred. When [there was enough] offspring, then he already began to call the people together, saying, »Now, I have dogs to distribute to you. Because it is better for everyone to have his [own] dog to go to the wild. The dog will help you a lot, because the dog will catch iguana. If he does not catch iguana, he will catch armadillo, if he does not catch armadillo, he will catch hogs, he will catch everything in the wild. So, that is what you are going to live with, with the dog.«

Very well, they say that one day he distributed the dogs like that. He gave one of them two [puppies]. Another two [he gave to another person], also, and another two [he gave to a third person], and then when they had received their dogs, they continued breeding until these dogs had also grown. Then they already gave puppies to the others that did not have any as well. So at last they had all received their dogs.

Then the keeper of the bush said, »Now yes, we are all right. Now everyone will stay with his dog. Now we are going to live with the dog. We are going to forage with the dog. Sometimes we are going to catch iguanas, sometimes we catch three-banded armadillo, big hairy armadillo, everything in the wild. So we are going to live off of the dog a little bit too. We are going to go to the wild and thus we are alright.«

And the people were accordant, because everyone went to the wild with the dog, and they were sure that they would bring [back] whatever animal the dog would catch. And when they arrived at home they always ate [something]. So the people were very content with the dogs. They were also happy with the keeper of the bush, who had distributed his dogs.

[Then one time] he said, »Now, since you have received your dogs, I am also going to show you how the wild animals are killed. First we have an animal that is called *màà'jwalahi'*, the hare, and some people catch it; then they have to twist its neck and throw it and there it will die. That is how they know about its death, how they are going to kill it. That is how it is going to be.«

»Afterwards, some will catch *niitsaj*, the Tayassu peccary. For this one, one has to start shooting it straight in the shoulder so that it cannot walk then. When

you arrow it in the shoulder, it cannot walk anymore, it falls down and you can reach it and kill it with a club. That is how they are going to do it, that is how they are going to kill it.«

»Now we have *ha'yàj*, the jaguar. If someone catches *ha'yàj*, then he has to arrow it directly, [aiming] below its heart, or also directly at its heart; so it will die.«

Thus *'Eeteksayhtaj* taught them, also what to do with other animals, to kill them. They already knew where the death was⁷⁶ of each animal.

Since the owner of the bush no longer had the animals [close by], he had recommended to his neighbors [the *'Weenhayek*] that they try to catch these animals. They say that these animals belonged to him, [but that he did this] because the animals had become accustomed to the bush and were already disgusted, they no longer returned to their homes. That is why it was necessary that we could catch them and kill them and eat everything.

So, thus had *'Eeteksayhtaj* ordered for the other people. Thus it has remained.

Then one day he said, »I do not know what we can do with this.«

And he had gathered with the people, they say, all the people. And they were in the forest, [and he knew] that the people liked to look for honey. They say that every morning they went to look for honey. So he, as he is master of everything [in the bush, he taught them also how to look for honey] [So they learned] and they went to forage to search for honey.

They also [went to the wild] with the dogs, and sometimes they caught wild animals, the people lived off of that. And *'Eeteksayhtaj*, the keeper of the bush, the keeper of everything [there], said, »Now the honey and the animals, this was mine, it belonged to me [but now it is for everyone].«

⁷⁶ »[Where it has] its death«, is an expression of the *'Weenhayek*, indicating the fatal point of any animal. If one hits that point, the animal dies. Each animal has »its death« at a specific point.

5.6. The Sun and the Moon Compare Their Powers⁷⁷

All those who have told stories have said that there is a time when the sun changes [its appearance]. Then it goes slowly. And there is another time when the sun walks fast. The ancestors say that, when his time comes, the sun sets like an old man, and because of this he cannot walk lighter, faster, because he is an old man who cannot walk more hurriedly.

And the wintertime arrives, and they say that the sun changes again, becomes young, and then, the elders say, that is why the sun arrives quickly to where it enters [goes down], because he is young and walks more strongly. And this is how they told it.

Very well, one time, they say that there were two people who were waiting on the sun, there where it was rising. And those two people, they say that they had turned black, because their bodies had been burned. Every time the sun rose, they say that it shone brightly and that its light always afflicted those who were at his door. They say that they were like gatekeepers of the sun, these two people. They had their little house and lived where their gate was, where the sun rose. And when the hour came, at about five o'clock, then the gate was already open, so that the sun would rise like that. And that is how they worked.

But before the sun came up, then first something like lightning had to come out before the sun. And then the flame of the fire afflicted those who were by the gate, their gatekeepers. And they, because of this, their bodies were changed, they turned black, so much so that they were burned. And thus they had held out for a long time, because the sun had hired [them] to be as his gatekeepers. They had carried this out and were there.

And they say that one day [the sun] had met the moon. When they were chatting with each other, the sun said, »My friend, why don't you go and visit me at my house?«

And the moon accepted. The moon said to the sun, »Yes, my friend, I believe that one day I will come to visit you.«⁷⁸ Thus had the moon indicated that he was going to come to visit.

⁷⁷ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M070. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 15 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁷⁸ The original text reads »between here, between the days«; here interpreted as »one day«.

They say that one day he came to visit the sun. Early in the morning, they say, the moon left his house to go and visit the sun. The sun had told the [proper] time to the moon, saying, »Look, my friend, you are going to wait there where there are two peons, who are my porters. So, there you are going to wait for me, because there I am going to come out. And there we are going to drink mate, because I have to rest and drink my mate before I continue the journey.«

When the moon arrived at the sun's porters, he said, »Here I will be awaiting the sun.«

His porters said, »Good, you have come to visit, but you have to hold on – because before the sun rises, his flames arrive – Which one cannot withstand. Very hot! Before the sun rises. And how would it be if one came near?«

Well, and the moon said, »Very well, I am going to wait anyway, as he told me that I have to wait ...«

So they stayed like this. At about five [in the morning], the gate began to open. They say that a little while later the flame of the sun came out. They say it was very strong, so strong that the moon could not stand it. And when his friend arrived, he could not chat because he was sick on account of it being so hot. He, the moon, could not stomach it anymore and he got sick. And in that moment he could not talk to his friend, because he was sick since his body was as if it was burned.

So the moon went away, silently, and went halfway home. Then when he got home, they say that he was sick because he had been burned. His whole body was as if it had been burned. He was sweating a lot and was sick.

Later, when he was better, they say he went to wait for his friend on the road and when he found him, he just waited. He did nothing, they say, because he was very far up [very high].

But they say that [the sun and] the moon met [again]. And the moon said, »My friend, now it is your turn to visit me, because I have many things to give you. So you had better come and visit me too.«

And they say that he appointed such a day, that the moon had to wait for the sun. And when the sun came, that appointed day, then he said, »You will find me here, where my hotel is ...«⁷⁹

⁷⁹ In 'Weenhayek, the temporal concept ›noon‹ is indicated by *tà 'ijwáala yààmho la'wet* (›the sun arrived at its place‹). Here the narrator translates it with the concept ›hotel‹ since it is a temporary residence.

Because the sun, they say, arrived at twelve o'clock, arriving just where his hotel was so he could have lunch. After lunch, they say, he went to the house of the moon to visit him. And when he approached that house, they say that he felt very cold. The cold snows came down hard, and he was on the ground and the sun could not stand the cold any longer.

But he kept trying to arrive, getting closer to that house, but the cold got worse and worse, so he could not get there. And then, finally, the sun was about to go out and not shine any more, and it seems that the sun was left like that, without light. And when he understood his weakness, then the sun turned back. He also could not reach the other's house.

And they say that he arrived where his own house was. He felt his illness. It had made him very ill because he felt very cold. And so it seems that the two were tied [in the struggle] over everything they had wanted to have. They had surely tested each other, for the moon is the master of cold, and the sun is that of heat. So the moon could not endure the flame of the fire, for it is very hot, and neither could the sun endure the cold of the moon. Because of that, the sun also could not reach the house of the moon. And so, they say, it has happened. That's it, the end.

5.11. When the People Were Birds⁸⁰

Now [as a result] of the story we have already told,⁸¹ after the fire, they say that nothing but birds had come out. Then they already formed a group, they say, and then they gave them names. But they had the appearance of birds.⁸² And those birds, they were of all kinds. Some of them were very strong. Then Thokwjwaj, in a meeting said,⁸³ »Now, this is the bird that is called *Wààn'lhàj*

⁸⁰ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M106. The narrator was **Celestino M àànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 14 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁸¹ The story referred to here is the previous story, M105, »The World Perishes by Fire«.

⁸² The original expression is: »That the birds appeared.«

⁸³ The original expression is: »Especially they, who are of all values, had strength. He said, in his meeting of them, he said.«

(the rhea); this is the one that is called 'Iniiky'u' (the seriema); and this is called *Qalaaq*⁸⁴ (the heron)!«

So he did with every wild animal, with the woodpeckers, the birds that had good beaks, and also with *Taats'i'* (the hornero). Thus, to all these he gave names.

Now when Thokwjjwaj had named everyone, the fire was already calmer, and [the people] were in their houses. Then they had gone [as] a visit and, when they were gathered there, that evening, they said, »Now, we, for our part, would like to know where the fire lives. We would like to visit him that we may also know what his body is like, and what his family is like.«⁸⁵

Then they had stayed like this.

»Tomorrow we are going to go, with *Wààn'lhàj* (rhea) and with 'Iniiky'u' (seriema).«

But it turned out that *Taats'i'* (the hornero) had listened to the people when they were announcing that the day after they were going to visit the fire. And he pledged himself, telling the others that, »Me too, I will go with you!«

[But] the others did not agree because they knew that this man liked to laugh at everything. Then one of them said to him, »No, I do not think this is for you at all! Because surely, if you come with us, something will happen to us, because you have no patience. You laugh at anything. Because suddenly, if we meet people like that, a bit ugly, then surely you will laugh because of them. Then, maybe they will blame us for what you have done!«

»Now, [that's why] it's not convenient for you to go with us tomorrow! We do not allow this, so you just stay at the house.«

[But] he had not prepared himself for that, but was ready to leave with the others. They say that they had gotten ready early. And when dawn broke, *Wààn'lhàj* and 'Iniiky'u' went out walking. And it turns out that *Taats'i'* had realized the situation; [but] he had still gotten up, gotten ready, and then left to catch up with the others. And [this even though] the others had told him that »You cannot go with us!«

But he would not listen. He went after the others, but he stayed far away, far away like this. And so he went, following the others. And the others, when they

⁸⁴ Here he refers to the cocoi heron, in 'Weenhayek *qalaaq*, and in Latin *Ardea cocoi*.

⁸⁵ The original expression is: »his flesh or yes, his persons«. Note here the resemblance to myth M007.

looked back, they say that they saw nothing. [It seemed] that *Taats'i'* was not coming. So, they said, »*Taats'i'* has not come. It is good that he is not coming!«

But *Taats'i'* had just stayed far off. And when [the others] arrived at a bend, then he walked lightly to reach that one. Then, when he came to that bend, he stopped for a while. And when the road was straight, then he waited until he saw *Wààn'lhàj* go around another bend, then he began to walk too. And so off they went.

[But] when they were close, then indeed *Taats'i'* appeared, approaching the others. And when the others looked back, they say that they saw *Taats'i'* following them. Then said one, »But how can this be, if we have thrown him out, so that he will not come with us ... What a thing! Now, what can we do? Well, we could just leave him. But now we are going to advise him to be patient and not to laugh.«

Then already, they arrived there, at the house of *'litàtaj* – the fire. They say that they found two beings, sitting thus, and that they had black bodies ... But, when they arrived, they say that they were received [well] by the fire. He said to them, »Welcome, *Wààn'lhàj* with *'Iniiky'u'* and *Taats'i'*.«

Well, *Taats'i'* [behaved well]; he was patient [and did not laugh] at anything that happened. Because they say that from the body of the fire, [the same] person of the fire, they say that, every time he bit, something like an ember came out, burning. And when he spat, the same. And so on.

[But] *Taats'i'* was attentive there, behind the others who were seated. And he did not want to look at the others. And when they remembered, the other (the fire) already said [to one of his assistants], »Now, you have to boil squash and I'm going to bring beans to boil for our visit!«

So they had invited their visitors to eat something. But when they looked around, they saw no fire. And they thought to themselves, »I do not know how these people eat, since there is no fire ...«

And it happened that, when the others arrived with the squash and the beans, then they already began to pour it into the pot, and [then] they poured water in. [After this] they sat down and then they put the pot on top of themselves. And another one, they say that he had put his belly up and had put himself on top of the pot. It boiled after a little while. And another one had done the same thing, he sat down and the pot was [already] boiling. And the others watched. [But] *Taats'i'* was there, calm, [because] he had not looked at anything.

And the others told him that he should not look at anything, that he should just be calm.

So everything was alright. When they gave them the squash, they ate, calmly they ate. And *Taats'i'* was quiet, not laughing at all. And when, after a while, they were about to finish eating, it happened that a pumpkin seed fell on *Wààn'lhàj's* leg. And, as it was hot, they say that he felt a [strong] pain.

»Ouch, hot!« he said.

And then *Taats'i'* already began to laugh at that matter, on account of that seed having fallen on *Wààn'lhàj's* leg. Then, once *Taats'i'* had laughed, the other (*Wààn'lhàj*) got up and went running again. And the fire became angry with them, then [because of this] they bolted, and *Taats'i'* as well.

[And the fire people said,] »So the people have just come to mock us!« That is how they spoke.

So when they coughed, big embers always came out and they were put in front of the people [who were fleeing]. When they got further [the embers reached them]. Then, they say, the bush began to burn. And [then] there was another ember, further ahead.

Wààn'lhàj and *'Iniiky'u'*, they had strength to run.⁸⁶ So they ran. And the embers could not reach them. [But it was not like that with] *Taats'i'*, and finally he could not run anymore. And the fire was already near. And when he saw his nest,⁸⁷ which was on a branch, they say that he went in there, to his house. And at that moment the others were also passing by and at that moment the fire reached him. Then his house began to burn and he was burned even more. And his eyes began to burst, inside his house.

But the others, *Wààn'lhàj* and *'Iniiky'u'*, went far away. And [it seemed] that the fire could not reach them. [But] at last, they say that they were very tired. And the fire was already [primed] to reach them. And so the fire had reached a little bit of their feathers, so they arrived scorched, because their feathers were burned. And then, when they were close to their house, they say that the fire went out. And when they arrived there, they say, where the other birds were, they said, »This happened because *Taats'i'* went with us!«

⁸⁶ These birds are runners; the rhea cannot fly at all and the seriema prefers running to flying. See vol. 6.

⁸⁷ Translator's note: The original text uses the Spanish term »horno« (>oven<) referring to the oven-like mud nest that gives the hornero (ovenbird) its name.

»Yes,« said the others, »this morning we told him not to leave, but he did not listen to us.«

»Well, but he has died. He is no longer alive. Not so bad that he has just died. No one else died.«

And so that is what they had told the others. And when they had seen *Wààn'lhàj* and *'Iniiky'u'*, who had arrived [back, then] again they gathered [all the people], and they were questioning them, and they told them how it had been, concerning the bodies of the fire.

»We don't know, [but at first] it seemed that it was just pure fire. And it turns out that they had had their bodies. And this we have seen ...«

And they told that when [the people of the fire] had boiled a thing, that he had put the pot on his breast, and it boiled [that way]. And [that the] other, sitting, had also put a pot on himself, still sitting, on his legs, and it began to boil as well. And when he coughed, they told of how a big ember came out, like fire. It always did this. And so it had happened, they say, that they had told [this story] in front of all the other birds, gathered together.

And so it was at that time. They say that [the people] no longer [had the] form of a person but they just had the form of birds. But before, in the ancient time, they say that they still [had the form of people]. [It was] because of the fire, they say, that they had the form of birds, but they spoke[indeed]. And they spoke also among themselves, so as people do.

So, then, thus have the ancestors told, that thus it happened when the birds were people. Until now they say that they remain so, [and that the] birds know everything. And so is the tale that I have heard. That's it. The end!

5.18. 'Asiinàj Teaches the 'Weenhayek How to Hunt⁸⁸

Now I think we will begin with another story about *'Asiinàj*, the dog, he who taught the others [dogs] how to kill the animals of the wild. He as well, *'Asiinàj*, he wanted to direct the others who were still new, so that they would come to be experts of the wild animals.

⁸⁸ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M203. The narrator was **Celestino M àànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 17 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

[But] he also had his owner, the dog. The dog was an expert; he already knew how to kill; he had gone like that many times, that is why he was an expert. That is why he wanted to teach the others who still did not know the animals. And then, they say that one day he went with other animals (dogs) and arrived there [in the forest]. When they were arriving, then he said, »Now, you have to pay attention because we are going to specifically hunt collared peccary⁸⁹– and they are bad – and we are also going to hunt white-lipped peccary.⁹⁰ Those animals are bad for us and [that is why] you have to be very careful. That's right.«

And 'Asiinàj said to them, »[Now], this [the outcome] depends on our owner. If our owner kills an animal quickly; then we are all right; but if he delays until one [of the peccaries] catches [one of us], the peccary will kill someone. Once [it happened like that]; it was because of our owner, who did not hurry to kill the beast; then [the peccary] grabbed one of us and could kill him. Thus we also have to suggest these things to our owner. We have to tell him that once we catch an animal, he has to kill it immediately. [If he does it] like that, then no, nothing will happen.«

And thus 'Asiinàj had spoken to them. And so they went to the bush.

And one day, they say they went to the bush. And when they found the collared peccary, then they killed it. Well! Nothing had happened. So 'Asiinàj had taught the other new dogs, saying, »You have to be very careful! When you catch the collared peccary, do like this: You must not be careless and you have to stand a little far away because they can use their snout just like that, and do not go to put yourself in front of [the animal] because this is, oof, this is a dangerous beast! And if it is a white-lipped peccary, then that peccary [is even] worse ...! That peccary is worse, because there are many of them! And then we have to be very careful.«

That is what he had advised to all the others. And when they went to the bush, they watched out for themselves too.

And one day, they say that they came across a white-lipped peccary. The owner began to catch them quickly with his spear, already in one go, because they were very close to the peccary. So, in just one go, the owner wanted to kill it with his spear, because it had already been overwhelmed. And then when they

⁸⁹ Here he refers to the collared peccary or ›taitetú‹, in local Spanish ›rosillo‹. In 'Weenhayek it is called 'aawutsaj, and in Latin *Tayassu tajacu*.

⁹⁰ Here it refers to the white-lipped peccary, in local Spanish ›majano‹ or ›tropero‹. In 'Weenhayek it is called 'niitsaj, and in Latin *Tayassu pecari*.

caught [the peccary], but before they had killed it, it was better to catch it in one go. So the owner had done it this way, he looked out for his dogs, so that none of them would get hurt, because if not, then he would have nothing more to live on, because they [the owners], they say that they were their uncles and that they lived off of the dog. [They] lived off of the countryside. They always lived like that ...

And then, all the people, each one lived with their dogs and [from the] animals of the bush; and with them, they say that they had hunted a lot; that's how it was. So, all the time they had done thus. And when they arrived at the house [after hunting], then, oof, there was a lot of food, always! And then they always took things [from the bush]. Now they started catching three-banded armadillo, iguana, big hairy armadillo, everything ..., and peccary, brocket ... The dog would catch everything. Then the people did not suffer [for lack] of meat; they had meat all the time. Because that's how people [lived] before.

Once the people were chasing all the animals of the bush, in short, so that they would not lack meat. And it is true; there was always meat, every day, because every day the people would go forage. And when they came back with collared peccary, [well] sometimes they would catch two, or three, or four ... And if it was a white-lipped peccary, then they would catch up to five, six, maybe ... It depended ... if they caught ... up to six, seven, they would catch. Like that. So there was meat every day; not from the house, but from the bush. And then they, oof, would always try to look for animals from the bush: armadillo, iguana ..., and all that, armadillo at least.

Uh, that was the main food! And so it was, says the story. So far, too, the story has also come to the end. We can go no further. This is the end!

5.24. The Cormorants Teach the 'Weenhayek How to Fish⁹¹

Now there is also another story, and it is a short [story].

There is a story that says that there were two [bird-]men who knew how to fish. Those two men were called cormorants.⁹² Those were the first fishermen. They were the only ones who knew how to fish. Then the people regarded (admired) how they were fishing.

The cormorants began to fish, diving. And when they dived, then they started [on the surface], there, looking at the water. They say that when they looked at the water, they saw all the things that were on the floor (bottom) there [below].

They say that when there were catfish over there, they knew where, because they themselves had discovered them with their sight. So they would go straight, to catch [that catfish]. [Yes,] they were fishermen – and the people were amazed.

And these birds knew how to dive. They could dive and stay [underwater] for a long time. So sometimes they could stay as long as five minutes. [At other times] they would take like two minutes ... And this was one thing that people admired. »How can they do that?«

But they knew how to do that. Another said, »Of course, [It is because] they are fishermen!«

Then all the people looked on. [And one said,] »We can do that too, be like fishermen!«

And then it seems that the people were encouraged, too, to be fishermen, because of [the cormorants].⁹³ And they said, »Now we have to prepare our nets to fish just like them!«

And then the people also began to dive [like the cormorants]. Some of them, they say they could not stand being in the water because they could not breathe [well]. Because when one has to dive in, one cannot breathe, one has to hold

⁹¹ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M260. The narrator was **Celestino M'ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 21 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁹² Here it refers to the neotropic cormorant, also called biguá, and in local Spanish ›chumuco‹. In 'Weenhayek it is called 'asqaanh, and in Latin *Phalacrocorax olivaceus*.

⁹³ The following piece of text has been omitted as it consists of a repetition, apparently of a mistake: »And that is this tale up to here. And we began to talk also about the fishermen who were cormorants. They say that people had watched how they dived.«

[contain] their breath for a while. And then in the river, when it is deep, some cannot reach the deep. Some, yes, can reach it, depending on their heart and depending on their head; because the head is in charge of everything, so when the head is bad, then you cannot be in the water [for a long] time, [because being submerged] makes you lose your thinking.

So the story goes. And so among them they had chosen the [healthiest] ones so that they could dive in and then others, [who were not going to do] anything but stay by the shore, fishing like that too, but without diving in.

So says the story that I have heard also. So this story – that’s it! [Already] the story is over ...

6.35. The Pleiades⁹⁴

Here we have come to a kind of story about the stars that are in the sky. [In this story I am going to talk about those] which here we have called *Pààtselhayh*.⁹⁵ I don’t know [how they are called] in Spanish, but I have heard that those stars are called ›cuadrillas‹ [›gang‹ or ›bunch‹], because they are several.

They say that the people from here, from the Chaco, since this place always has its cold season, [utilize this] to catch fish. [But previously] the people did not know where the cold comes from. They say that the fish always froze in the water. And they took advantage of this to take them. So when all the fish had frozen, they took them out more easily with their scissor nets and [then] they would put them out to grill. They say that many people utilized this. And everybody had roast [fish] every day.

But it turns out that the people did not know [where the cold came from]. And one day they said, »Where does all this cold come from? It is so [cold] here and yet one doesn’t know where it comes from!«

⁹⁴ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M061. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 13 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

⁹⁵ The group of stars, called *Pààtselhayh* in ’Weenhayek, is interpreted as (a) the Pleiades, or ›cuadrilles‹ in local Castilian; but also as (b) a mythological figure who is the owner of the wild fruits (cf. Enrique Palavecino (1979): »The Magic World of the Mataco.« *Latin American Indian Literatures* 3(2):61-75, p. 65).

Then one day, when they had made all that [a lot of] roast fish, and they say that they had been full of so much roast, all at once a *hiyaawu*⁹⁶ said to them, »I have realized something when I was chanting ...«

He had been chanting with his gourd. Then he, with his diviner, had realized that the things we received here had been by means of the *Pààtselhayh* stars. They say that they had sent cold here, so that, in short, we would have fish. They themselves had sent so much cold, and they say that these people are the keepers of the cold. And very well, all the people had come to know. But the *hiyaawu* said in his meeting with them to the others, »Now it seems to me that the *Pààtselhayh* are going to come to collect (demand) fish from us; [they will come] here, where we are getting [fish], because they say that they have helped us for a long time. They say that they have helped us ... And – in short, so that we can utilize this and catch fish more easily, that is why they are sending us so much cold; and because of this the fish have sunk, and then we utilize this to catch fish. But we have not known where the cold comes from. Now we have learned that it is because of those stars that we see as *Pààtselhayh*. They are, they say, the ones that send the cold!«

Well, very well, the people had now come to know.

[But it turns out that] one day they [the *Pààtselhayh*] had advised the *hiyaawu*, »Now we want to go [to visit you] to also receive some of the fish that you have. I would like you all also to realize, or perhaps think about what we have helped you with. We also ask you to help us by giving us some roasted fish, because we also need something to eat. And since we have done this, we have helped in everything you all needed ...«

Then the people accepted and said, »Yes, they can just come to where we are. We are going to help them and give them everything they want, because we have a lot of fish roasts.«

Very good! They were like this.⁹⁷

Then the day arrived. They say that in the morning five people had crossed [the river].⁹⁸ But before they crossed it, they say that they had urged the *hiyaawu*, who was like an acquaintance [of theirs], »Be very careful! [When we

⁹⁶ The word *hiyaawu* denotes the shaman, the religious specialist of the 'Weenhayek.

⁹⁷ Here there has been a change of cassette. It is possible that some words have been lost.

⁹⁸ It is not entirely clear whether here it refers to the Pilcomayo River or to some celestial ›river‹, in which case probably *nààij* (›the Milky Way‹).

meet] it is better that there is no child [among you] because it may be that the children will suspect [joke about] us and make fun of us, or treat us in some way like that ... Because we are not like you, [but] we [are], more or less, like people. Our bodies are ugly, our face, our body ... We are not very fat. It seems like our bodies are very skinny. And so I think it is better for the children to stay away and only the adults to await us there tomorrow.«

So that night they say that they were getting together, and one of them said, »Now you youngsters, young men, girls, when in the morning you see that five people are crossing over, I think it's better for you to stay away from us. Leave it to us. As parents, we are going to receive these visitors! I think it is better that all of you, young men and girls, can stay away until [the visit] from them passes – then you can go back to your houses.«

And thus he had advised all the families. And it turns out that there was a question, »But why don't we also have the right to see [those people] and meet them?«

»No, they [said in a very] clear way that they think someone is going to make fun of them or maybe mistreat them in some way! Because those people are not like us. They have a lot of things about their bodies that we don't like. And it seems that they are not people, like us, [but] they have [other] shapes and things. And also their hair is not like our hair and their bodies are not like our bodies. The body of these people is black as coal; black, quite black. Then their shins are very thin, only their bellies are very big and so it seems that they can hardly walk and they do not want anyone to make fun of them because they are the ones who do all things.«

So, that's how the old man had answered the boys. And the next day, they saw the five people who were crossing, bringing the llicas that we have named *qatààtsaj*. The *qatààtsaj* were their llicas of them. So [it was what] they used, what they brought.

And when they crossed, then [the parents] ordered all the children to go and stay far away. None of them could be with the old people because, without warning, they would have made fun of them. And they knew that if someone made fun [of the visitors], then something could happen. And when they had crossed, they say that they arrived to where the ›captain‹ was.⁹⁹ The captain stood up,

⁹⁹ The Spanish word »capitán« here refers to the 'Weenhayek socio-political leader, the *ni-yaat*. See vol. 1 or Jan-Åke Alvarsson (1988): *The Mataco of the Gran Chaco: An Ethnographic Account of Change and Continuity in Mataco Socio-Economic Organization*.

greeting and received them as welcome; he had given them place [where to sit] and then, at once, had given them roasted fish. They ate very well and all the people were attentive to serve them and received them well. And although these people were a little ugly, [still] none had spoken thus [badly], but they were all glad for [the visit of] them, and because they said that they had helped to send the cold so that there would be fish and that it would be easier for them to catch [the fish].

»Now we want to take some of roast [fish] with,« they said.

Well, then they gave them some [roasted fish]. And when they had finished eating, then the people gathered their roasts. Some had offered ten, [others] ten, [and still others] ten ... Since they had been several, they had been able to gather [a lot of] fish. And the five star-people were well laden with roasted fish.

Then there was a group of the people who did not agree with receiving these visitors.

»We are always in need of this stuff,« they thought.¹⁰⁰ »Why should we treat them to fish? Now, let them fish if they want to eat fish! I do not agree to gift them anything!«

Then they began to mock, or behave [poorly towards these visitors]. The women said, »These [people] are ugly! Because these people do not look like people, like us ... What are these people for? So, better not to treat them to anything ...«

That is how they had treated them. And they, as it is the people who have their great diviners, because they were not [real] people, [but] they had known the thought, though the others had not spoken loudly, but in this way they had [understood] their thoughts. And [therefore] they knew also that [some] did not want to treat them to anything. So when they were preparing their cargo and were finishing loading, they called the captain over. And all those who received the visitors well, they called them, they gathered them together. And talked very slowly with them, saying, »Now we are going there again, to our place. And here you have to prepare lots and lots of firewood, and you have to prepare that for three days. Have lots of firewood, because we know that there is a part of you

Uppsala/Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International (Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology, 11), p. 130.

¹⁰⁰ The original sentence was: »then these people had thought«.

that does not agree with us, so now we are going to send a cold, not upon the fish, but upon the people that are mocking us!«

Very well, thus they knew. And all those who had treated them to fish, they say that they [immediately] began to gather wood. For three days they had gathered firewood. They had lots, lots, because they had said that it [this cold] was going to last long, almost some twenty nights it was going to last; twenty days and twenty nights.¹⁰¹ And the wood that they had piled up, they had put inside their little houses, [until they were] full, and then the rest, outside.

When the night came, after the time that [the star-people] had designated, then the cold came down, such cold! And the people who had served [the visitors], they stoked their fire brands, and they stayed very calm, with the fire.

Now, those who had not known of these things, they had been careless. They had not gathered any wood. And those who [only] had had a little [firewood] when the [cold] came, they say that their firewood had run out.

Then it began to rain¹⁰² and it got cold. And the cold came settling (coming down) on them like snow. Each one cried out due to the cold until they died. They all had their mouths full of pure ice. And everyone, everyone had been filled [with ice].

Then those who had served these star-people, they say that they were stoking their fires calmly and did not want to give away wood to the others either. And those who made fun of those star-people, they got screwed over, they suffered and died from all the cold, [and so it went on] until those people were no more.

Then the weather [of cold] was suspended. [Again] there was sun, there was everything, but of the firewood they had, there was very little left, it was almost not enough [for] the whole time.

So there was nothing left of those who had mocked those star-people. It is in this manner they say that it had happened, in those times, with those who did not want to serve those who had come from there, from the sky. And then they say that it had been sunny there, they had warmed up and everyone had settled down once more. And then they lived well again and all the others who had mocked had died from the cold.

¹⁰¹ Here the narrator adds: »So all in all this means that the time it is going to last is forty.«

¹⁰² The original expression is »largar el agua« [release the water]. The following expression indicates that it is possibly a hailstorm.

And so they say that it had happened once upon a time. That's it! The end!

7.13. Spider Teaches the 'Weenhayek to Weave¹⁰³

They say that in that [ancient] time no one knew how to weave. It was only *Kyohoot* (the spider-woman) who knew how to weave. And it is always like that with Spider – this we can still see today – that when she wants to make her nest, you can see for yourself what she is doing. They say that she began to teach people how to make (weave) whatever she felt like. She said to the people, »[In this way] we can make all the things which we lack!«

Because everyone who went to the bush [to forage] did not have something to transport the things of the bush.

»I think it would be better ... Let us do a thing! Let's make a llica so that the man can transport [all the things he finds in the bush]! And the women can also have their share. Let us make other llicas, special ones, for them!«¹⁰⁴

Then Spider began to teach the people. She wove a llica in front of all the other women. Then the women were left to learn. And each time, they say she did like four jobs, for the four women. And [then] she had also stayed, monitoring everything that the women were doing. And when they were ready, then she had put another thread [to the llicas] so that [the women] would be able to carry them.

When all [the llicas] had their handles [belts/straps], then [Spider] began to call the men together. She said that the man could use a llica, the *hiilu'*. Then the *hiilu'* had come out well and she had also taken out several drawings, which she had thought of putting on. Then she said, »Now it is good! Let the men have this *hiilu'*, like this, all the time! And the women can work on this!«

Then she began to weave a special bag for women, a *sikyet*. And that llica was bigger. She wove it, and when she had finished it later she gave it to the women to carry all the things that are in the bush. Then she saw that it was very good.

¹⁰³ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narrative has the classification number M102. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 12 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹⁰⁴ In 'Weenhayek a linguistic distinction is made between the llica for women (*sikyet*) and the one for men (*hiilu'*).

[Then] she had advised the women, saying, »Now, do this all the time! This way, you will not lack [a way to] carry things from the bush. Because if you do not [have these llicas], you do not have a way to carry the things. And we as women also have to do our part.«

So, as it is the truth, the people followed this and worked like this. Spider taught them how to pull up caraguatá, and how to make thread, and then how to paint it. Spider also knew how to dye it. Then she would pick the fruits in the bush, and also roots. They say that she used to get dye from that, which she put in the threads. So the work turned out very pretty. That is how they say she did it.

And that's how [the women] continued to do it all the time, until now they still use [the same]. This work [of caraguatá] exists until now because Spider taught it to the people. And until now, they are still working it; the most recent people of today. And this work is just going on, but it was Spider who taught it [first]. Before they didn't know how to weave, but in the ancient time, Spider was teaching [the women] so that there was all this work. And like what, nowadays, this work is still continuing. And this is the way it had happened in the story that I have heard.

7.14. Si'wookw Makes the First Honey Aloja¹⁰⁵

Si'wookw (the woodpecker),¹⁰⁶ is very good at looking for honey. He always lives off of that. And one day he found himself with a lot of honey and he did not know what to do with it and he said to his companion, »What we are going to do now, so that the honey is not wasted, we ought to try to preserve it!«

»But how are we going to preserve it?« said his companion.

Then Si'wookw placed the honey in a large pot and began to pour water [over it] and mix it, until it had a good ratio. He wanted to have it like that, prepared, ready to drink, and that it should not be pure like that, just with a little water, so that when he wanted to drink, he would have it ready.

¹⁰⁵ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M389. The narrator was **Ignacio Noolnejen Pérez**. It was recorded on 11 May 1985 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹⁰⁶ The *si'wookw* bird is the cream-backed woodpecker (*Campephilus leucopogon*), admired by the 'Weenhayek for its ability to locate bee nests.

And one night passed, two nights passed, and he already heard something. »What is happening?« they said, »Is it already boiling? Or, what is it?«

[They did not know that] the honey was fermenting as if it were boiling.

»Ah, then it's no good anymore,« he said, »It's already going to be lost because someone [surely] has spoken evil; someone must have cursed [it], that's why it sounds like that at night!«

[But] after about two days it had quieted down. There was silence, nothing could be heard anymore. It [the aloja] was ready, completed. Then *Si'wookw*'s companion said, »Let us drink [a little], let us see how it tastes!«

And they drank a little and it was a little bit sour, but they just drank another little bit and another ... They drank about a glass and [the aloja] was very strong, like alcohol. Then just like that, *Si'wookw* fell over, and he was [as if] dead.

»Well, my friend died,« said the other, »Then I have to die too!«

And he tasted and drank another glass and was [as] dead himself.

[After a while] *Si'wookw* [woke up] and he was looking around, like this ... And [then] the other one drank a little bit [more] – and he did not die, he was talking. That was the first time, they say people had been seen getting drunk.

But they say they started talking, talking ... And another one came, and [then another], and they all drank until they had gotten drunk. And *Si'wookw*, who had drunk it all at once, had lain down like that, sleeping [for a little while, and so the others] thought he was dead; [but] he was not dead.¹⁰⁷

And so, that time, they had the first [honey aloja] party. *Si'wookw*'s party with the honey.

8.3. The Three-banded Armadillo and His Son¹⁰⁸

Now, there is a story that I am also going to tell. It is a story that talks about the armadillo and all the birds that have their beaks as a tool.

¹⁰⁷ In this story the narration is very vague in pointing out who the protagonist is in each scene. It is, for example, not very clear whether it is the woodpecker who is the first to get drunk, or whether it is his friend.

¹⁰⁸ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M011. The narrator was **Celestino M'ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 6 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

In ancient times, they say that all the birds were people, they also talked [like people]. We have a bird that is called ›carpintero‹ [›woodpecker‹].¹⁰⁹ We also have other small woodpeckers of which I don't know their names in Spanish, but they are woodpeckers, all of them.

There are at least four kinds.¹¹⁰ In our language [Weenhayek] we say we have *si'wookw*, we have *suulajkyanis*, and we have *selhtaj* and '*laatajtet'iwo*'. That is how we name those birds, but I do not know what their names are in Spanish. So we just say that they are woodpeckers, the four woodpeckers. One of the biggest ones is the black woodpecker, with its white back. And the other one is overo, also a little yellow. And there is another one that is black, it is also overo. And there is another little one that is also yellow and has a colored crest.

So that's how they have been formed. And they say that [in the old days], every time they went to forage in the forest, they brought honey back, as they are practical in these things. Every day a group would go to fetch honey.

[But] the poor armadillo, he had no beak, he had nothing. They say that his [woodpecker] beak was called ›hachet‹. So, the armadillo had nothing [and neither] did the fox. And the fox always had the armadillo as his friend, they always went [together]. Then they say that the armadillo had a son one day. He was thinking, ›I don't know, what do I do without a tool? I cannot do anything. But now I have my son. I am going to try what [I can] do. I am going to try it out with my son ...‹

Then one day, they say that he was going to go out to forage, together with the people. And, there were all the woodpeckers, who were handy, who had their tools. And they had begun to make fun of the armadillo, saying, ›Now, what is he going to do, since he has no tool?‹

[But] armadillo thought, ›Now I have my son. I think that I will live off him ...‹

¹⁰⁹ Translator's note: ›Carpintero‹, the Spanish word for ›woodpecker‹, also means ›carpenter‹.

¹¹⁰ Here the original sentence says: ›There are about three kinds‹, and then they mention four (and there are even more). Therefore, the sentence has been changed. As for the woodpeckers, *si'wookw* is the cream-backed woodpecker, ›carpintero lomo blanco‹ in Spanish, and *Campephilus leucopogon* in Latin; *suulajkyanis* is the green-barred woodpecker, ›carpintero real común‹ in Spanish, and *Colaptes melanolaimus* in Latin; *seelhtaj* is the white-fronted woodpecker, ›carpintero del cardón‹ in Spanish, and *Melanerpes cactorum* in Latin; and finally '*laatajtet'iwo*' or '*laatajtet'iwo'jwaj*' is the white-barred piculet, ›carpinterito común‹ in Spanish, and *Picumnus cirratus* in Latin.

Then, one day later, they say that [again] they went to forage. And when they had found honey, over there on a tree, they say that the armadillo had picked up his son. And when he lifted him up, he had formed himself into a ball. Then armadillo began to throw him towards the trunk, where the honey was. And it turns out that, when it hit there, then it seems that the tree opened.

And the tree opened, and it indeed seemed like the honey was free for him to be able to take it. So, when they had located that honey, they took it and put it all into their containers that they had, containers to carry honey.

Then they went on for another stretch, and they found another nest. Then the fox was beginning to walk with his friend [the armadillo]. And they say that armadillo invited him every time. Then, finally the time came when the fox was also going to have his own child. And [after some] time, they say that the son of the fox was already a big boy. Then the fox thought, »Now, companion, [now] I am going to do just like you! I am going to try out my son, let us see how he comes out! Quickly he will turn out like your son ...«

Very well. Then the armadillo did not suffer any more regarding [the matter of] what to live off of. He had his son, who was the entirety of his help. Every time he arrived with so much honey, they say, just like those who had their sharp beaks to extract honey. [But] he as well, they say, he also took some back every time. Then, one day, they say, the fox said to the armadillo, »Now yes, I am going to do just like you!«

And when they went into the bush, they say that they had located honey. Then the fox went to one side, and said, »Now I will search myself!«

And when he had found [honey], then he tried it out with his son. And when he grasped his son, [he too] had formed himself into a ball, so he threw him over there, where the trunk was, where the honey was. [But] when his son hit there, they say that [he] was dead. The son died. The fox could do nothing, because his son died. So he said, »Now I am going to do something!«

And they say that the fox arrived with his dead son. He no longer looked like a fox, when [his father was] carrying him.¹¹¹ Well, there was nothing further to do. The fox had nothing to do. He had to quit [this], because his son died.

Then one day armadillo said, »Now friend let us leave off [all that]!«

¹¹¹ The original sentence says: »He no longer looked like him, like him, but he was dropping his dead son.«

The armadillo had found a road where he knew a cart with cargo, with cheese, came, they say. So that is where they went. And the armadillo [thought that] when [the cart came along] the road, he was going to put himself there, in the middle, where the wheel was. He would stand there, like a log, to see if he could jostle the cart, to see if anything would fall off, because he knew the cart to be well loaded, with cheese hanging [off the side].

So, the day came when the cart passed by, and they went there. When the cart passed by, armadillo stood in the middle of the road, where the wheel was, like a log, »Let us see if it crushes me or if it does not crush me!«

And as we know, the armadillo is tough. He has the hardest shell. So, he closed his shell and went over there. And when the cart arrived, they say that it ran over that log, bounced greatly, and when it returned to the ground, they say that a cheese fell off. Because it was a very strong ›baquiazó‹ (a jolt). Then, when the cart passed by, the armadillo took out the cheese that had fallen there. And then he began to eat quietly with his son that he had, and he also invited the fox, because the fox was still going about with the armadillo.

So, they say that a day arrived [when] fox said to armadillo, »Now, friend, I also want to do like this!«¹¹²

So off they went [to make the cart bounce again], and when they reached the road, then the armadillo said to the fox, »Now, my friend, you have to put yourself there, further on! Or else you go first, and then I will stay here as the second one.«

Well. The fox went first and stood in the middle of the road, where the wheel passed. Then, when the cart arrived, they say that it crushed the fox, and it began to burst, as if it were burst rubber. There the fox died. He could not do anything, the cart [didn't even] move, because the [body] burst. But when he got to where the armadillo was, they say that there was a great hit, and that two cheeses fell there, as they always did. And then the armadillo thought, »Let's see, where is my friend? He has not arrived until now ...«

So he went to look for him, to see where he was. And when he got there, he found the other one dead.

¹¹² Here the following portion has been omitted (because it is a repetition): »Now the fox's turn had come. »Now I want to do this too.«

»Oh,« he said, »How [can it be] like that? He is dead, and I cannot do anything! Poor him! Poor brother, how he is suffering! Now what shall I do? And I, who has gotten used to going about with him ...«

Then, the armadillo, with his secret, it seems that he raised the other one up, he had woken him up, saying, »Fox, get up!«

Then he got up, they say, and said, »Oh, I have slept hard!«

[But] the other said to him, »Well no, you had died. [But now], come! Come with me, let us go over there to eat, I have something over there ...!«

So they [went there, and] began to eat. Then, the fox no longer wanted to be [as an obstacle], but he began to be with the armadillo more often, [leaving aside] what he had done with him. After that they did not do any more things [mischief], so it could be that they were alright.

So, this story also came to the end; [this is what] I know how to tell because this way, that's it, they are like this. So I think I can't go on any longer, and just here it ends.

8.5. The Three-banded Armadillo and the Fox¹¹³

They say that there were two poor men [*Ky'anhoo*h (three-banded armadillo) and '*Imaawoh* (fox)]. They were very poor and did not separate from each other, and they sought out their little jobs as *changuitas*.¹¹⁴ And '*Imaawoh* had done a little job and bought himself a loaf of bread. And suddenly *Ky'anhoo*h appeared and said to him, »Hey, treat me! I am going to do the same for you, I am going to treat you to some kind of prize.«

¹¹³ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration is made up of three parts, which have the classification numbers M380, M381 and M382 respectively. The narrator was **Carlos Maahtehen Aparicio**. They were recorded on 9 May 1985 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia. The three parts are: »The three-banded armadillo, the fox and the cheese« (M380) [*Ky'anhoo*h wet '*imaawoh*]; »The three-banded armadillo, the fox and the horses« (M381) [*Ky'anhoo*, '*imaawoh* wet '*laatas*]; and »The three-banded armadillo and the fox are companions« (M382) [*Ky'anhoo*h wet '*imaawoh*].

¹¹⁴ This term refers to temporary jobs or simple services that result in a pittance reward (literally »a little job«).

And they say that *'Imaawoh* did not want to treat him because the other one was a swindler. But *Ky'anhooh* had used a way to lie to him. And how well he could lie to him! Well, at least he had treated him to a little bit.

»If you do not invite me, I am going to kill you!« he told him.

After a while, (it was already night) he said, »Hey, Juancito, did you know that I have seen a piece of cheese in the pool? Now, if you want, I will take you to where it is.«

Well, he had taken Juancito to the river, skipping along.

»Hey, where is it?« he said.

But *Ky'anhooh*, they say that he had looked at the [surface of the] pool. There was the ›cheese‹, but it was not the cheese, it was the moon. It was quite clear, there it was. And they say that the fox said to him, »Hey, but what are we doing with so much water!«

And the other said, »You know what? Let us do something! You drink all this water and then we will take out the cheese!«

But the fox could not finish with the water. And well, [the fox drank] until the guy died. But *Ky'anhooh* was very bad. He saw that the other one was dead and he took a step on him and they say he picked him up, calmly.

»Well, hey, let us go!«

And they say that in a while [he had picked him up and carried him]. And he bothered Juancito. He let him sit on his shoulder, like an ant's load, just a little bit.

After a while he heard the noise of a wagon coming. Then he said, »What can I do? I have to do this. I have to make a little curb [mound] so that I can step on it, so that there is a little bump so that the cheese falls ...«

So he was digging so that there would be a little mound [of earth]. And when [the wagon] came, it went over it, bounced, and a cheese fell. When he saw that the cart was already going far away, then he was pleased. And he went back to bother Juancito.

»Hey, we are going to eat well! Now you can treat me.«

And he gave a little bit to the other one.

»For the third time, I tell you, if you do not invite me, I am going to kill you!«

And just then he heard the cart again.

»Hey, Juancito, you know the cart is coming again. You have to dig and get under it, otherwise it is going to go over you! The cheese will fall down for sure! I have [a hole] there. I've already dug, you can get in there.«

»It will certainly be so?« said the other.

»Yes, it is true.«

And Juancito went running, got in and the cart came. And wham! He could not get up any more. The fox remained. And *Ky'anhooh*, he took him out, threw him aside and then went on [walking], calmly.

»Well, let's go!«

Further on, they saw some horses playing on the beach.

»Hey, Juancito!«

»What?« [Juancito] answered.

»We're going to play with the horses, we are going to make a trap! You, tie a string tightly around your waist!«

Ky'anhooh was quick-witted, and was tying the other on another pole. And the fool had let himself be tied. And the horses came, and they say that Juancito was lost like paper. And *Ky'anhooh*, as his trunk (body) was good (strong), when he fell off the horse he just got up, and got on the horse again and picked up poor Juancito, piece by piece. His legs and head had been blown off. One after one, he picked up the pieces, until he had piled him up like this. He took a step and Juancito came out laughing.

»You know,« he said, »I fell asleep! I've fallen asleep, I've just woken up. Let's go!«

And they got on two donkeys and rode off whistling, calmly.

8.6. The Three-banded Armadillo, the Fox and the Beehive¹¹⁵

Now we begin to tell another tale that was told by those elders.

They say that there were two men. A man called armadillo, and another called fox. It turns out that these people had been walking in the countryside, the two of them always [together]. And one day [armadillo] said to his friend, »Tomorrow we are going to go to the bush, to look for hives!«

So the next day, they went into the bush. And it turned out that these men were testing each other. And when they got to the bush one said to the other,

¹¹⁵ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M122. The narrator was **Celestino M'ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 19 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

»We have arrived here in the bush. Now you have to go to the other side and I am going to go to this side! You are going to go to that side!«

Then they separated and one went to the other side. And it happened that the armadillo crossed paths with the fox further on. They say they did not find any hives. And when they had been foraging for a while, suddenly the armadillo remembered something [he could do] to test his companion.¹¹⁶ So when the fox was approaching, armadillo put himself at the underside of a branch, hanging like [a nest of] bees. And then the fox, when he looked at [that] side, found [a nest of] bees, hanging. And he went over there, content, »Now yes, I have found a hive!«

And when he got there, he was looking for a dry stick so that he could turn over [that nest of] bees. And when he had found a dry stick, he broke it into pieces and began to take shots. And when he threw, he missed several times. But then they say that he had exactly struck the hands of [the armadillo], where he was holding onto the tree. And when he had hit his hands, they say that he let go of the stick and fell to the ground.

And when he fell to the ground, they say that the fox went over there, in a hurry to have [honey]. But when he moved it, it had been his friend armadillo. Then he said, »Friend, why do you do this to me in this way? This must not be done!«

»Well,« said the armadillo, »let's drop it. Let's go for a walk, let's look again! Now yes, let's go and search intently!«

[But] the armadillo did not know well how the fox thought either. So when he was walking, looking for honey, in that moment, they say that the fox had crossed paths with the armadillo. And when the armadillo was approaching, then the fox started to climb a tree. And as he is long, suddenly the armadillo saw [a nest of] bees, hanging like that, long, it seemed. Then he [became] content. He did not realize [that it was his partner].

And when he started to throw, they say that the fox did not fall. Too hard to fall! Sometimes his friend would hit his hands, where he was grabbing the tree, and he did not fall, he did not unfurl, but he peed. And it turns out that when the armadillo saw something that was dripping over there, he said, »Ah, now the honey is dripping, it is already dripping!«

¹¹⁶ Here the narrator repeats himself; the following repetition has been omitted: »And armadillo had gone to meet up with the fox where the fox was scrounging.«

But when he licked it, trying it, they say that the smell was of fox urine. Then he said to his friend, »My friend, why are you doing this? Get down and let's go!« They were arguing with each other because they were acting this way [to each other].

»Well, friend,« said the fox, »now let's leave. Now let us go for a walk, calmly. We are not going to act like this anymore. Now we're going to go look for honey!«

So they say they tied. And they tarried for a while. And when it was getting late, they say that they came back with nothing, because they were doing that test, one to the other. And in that way they stayed. Because of that it seems that they found nothing. They came [to the house] the same, they didn't bring anything. So they stayed in their houses.

8.8. The Three-banded Armadillo Marries a Pretty Woman¹¹⁷

They say that there was a girl [who was very pretty] and the young men chased after her. But she had parents who were mean to her, and the old folks [parents] did not know what to do with the daughter so to not let her marry some young man. But she did, she wanted to marry someone.

So the parents began to dig inside their house, so that their daughter would stay there and not go outside, but that she herself could be quiet in that hole, in that well.¹¹⁸ And they just kept her there. She had everything there, her wash-room, she received her food there, and she did not go outside. And all the young men, they say that they had the desire to find her, but they could not, because she was inside the earth; she was well guarded there.

And afterwards, every time the young men gathered together [they said], »Now, what can we do to catch this girl, who is so nice, who is the prettiest? Now she does not go outside!«

It turns out that they did not know that the girl was in a well that the parents had dug so that she would be quiet there and not go outside.

¹¹⁷ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M174. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 7 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹¹⁸ Here it refers to an underground room with an entrance in the form of a (mining) gallery. The word ›pathway‹ refers to is this gallery.

The girl was quiet there. [But] one day, they say a man came and was chatting with the other men and said, »There is a woman they are mean to, they do not want her to go around with any man. That girl is very young too, and still no man has used [had sex with] that woman. What shall we do about this woman? And if someone wins this woman, they say they are going to marry, surely.«

Then the armadillo was thinking, »Now I have thought something here. Now what can I do? Now as I have a fingernail that is quite sharp, I can dig the earth very well ...!«

Then, one night, they say that armadillo began to dig. He stood away from the wall and began to dig. And as he dug, he threw all the dirt out. And when he arrived at the deepest part, they say he found the path [entrance] of the girl. She was going into [her room under the earth] to leave [say goodbye] to her parents.

So the armadillo found her there and took the earth that he had taken out when he was digging, and covered the path (entrance) of the woman. Then she no longer had a way out to meet with her parents. Then armadillo went quietly digging until he found the girl, inside the earth (in her underground room).

But the girl [got scared and] wanted to bolt off, but there was no way to. When she got to the path she knew to take, it was blocked and she could not get out anymore. So she stayed calm, chatting with armadillo. And armadillo told her that he had [a promise] taken out of the parents' mouths, »Now I am here with you by order of your parents. Your parents told me that I could meet you here to be with you for a while. Your dad agreed for me to marry you and your mom too, so they themselves have sent me here to find you and to stay with you all the time.«

»No,« she said, »I do not want you! Now I have to go to where my parents [are] to tell them.«

»Fine,« he said, »Go on!«

But when the girl wanted to go up the path she [had], she found it blocked. She could not go to where [her parents were] because her pathway was blocked. Then she could not go there anymore.

Then, finally, the girl went back there and she was with the armadillo and the parents did not know anything, because the path was blocked. Their daughter was missing for about three months. They did not know what had happened to the daughter. She was lost. And when suddenly the armadillo saw that the woman was pregnant, he said, »Now it seems that it is indeed convenient for me to take her outside!«

Then the same armadillo worked to unblock the path that had been blocked by himself. Now the armadillo said to the girl, »Now we are going to go to your parents. We are going to find them and there we are going to stay with them.«

So they left. When the girl arrived [home], they say that the parents were amazed at their daughter.

»But my daughter,« said her mother, »where have you been?«

»I,« she said, »I've just been inside. It turns out that the armadillo found me there and had taken [the promise] out of your mouth, that you yourselves had sent him to find me there, inside the earth.«

Then they began to deny it. »No, we have not talked with anyone! So the armadillo could not have arrived here to our house either!«

»Well, what are we going to do? He has already won me over, and here too, I am pregnant ...«

Then her parents were satisfied. The other young men began to make fun of the armadillo, because the girl was nice and all the young men wanted to marry her, but they had not been able to. Now the armadillo could marry by force, because he could dig. And [although] her parents [at first] had not accepted that their daughter should marry him, since the two were not fitting together well – she was the prettier one and he was the ugly one – [but so it had remained].

»But it does not matter,« said the girl, »What are we going to do? I am used to him, and at the same time I am pregnant and so I cannot move away ...«

Then the others said, »Well, leave him then, one day we will catch him! Don't you see that he is like food and that [one day] some dog will find him and kill him. We need not be jealous of him!«

So, as the armadillo was going to forage around there, they say that one day he and his wife had a boy. And when the boy was about three months old, he was already a big boy, so he began to forage. Every afternoon he would bring all the things they needed.

It turns out that [one day], when the Chaqueños were roaming,¹¹⁹ they say that their dogs had found the armadillo and had started to kill him. And when they killed him and skinned its head, they took it to the house and put it to roast. And the other day, his brothers-in-law went there to the post [house] of the Chaqueños, they say that they had found his hide that was on top of an oven,

¹¹⁹ Here he refers to the cattle-raising population of Creole or Mestizo origin.

which was there. And when they arrived they said, »Oh, there is our brother-in-law's hide!«

»Oh, they killed him! That is why he did not come back to the house!«

And when they returned to the house they said [to the wife of the armadillo], »Look, we have found your husband's hide. He was over there in that post, they had already killed him ...«

Then the woman began to cry.

»Now,« she said, »I am not going to get married anymore. I am going to be a widow for the rest of my life ...«¹²⁰

That's how they say the story was. So until those times, they had done it like that. She who was a widow had to be a widow until the end of her time. That's how they [the ancestors] were, like that.

That's it! The story is over!

8.9. The Three-banded Armadillo Acts Sick and Kills the Jaguar¹²¹

It happened that the jaguar had eaten the son of the armadillo. [But] the armadillo found his son's shell, he was crying and realized that it was the jaguar that had eaten him. He was already very angry and was crying, saying, »What am I going to do now? I have to find a way to kill that man, so vile, who is eating people, all the time he eats someone ... But I am going to kill him!«

And one night, the armadillo had come [to his house], which was right along the road where the jaguar always passed. The jaguar was coming and the armadillo was lying there, belly up. The jaguar arrived, looked at him and said, »What are you doing armadillo, why are you like that?«

But [the jaguar] was already ready to eat him. He was looking for food and when he saw the armadillo like that, he thought about grabbing him.

¹²⁰ The original phrase is: »until the final time«.

¹²¹ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M402. The narrator was **Ignacio Noolnejen Pérez**. It was recorded on 11 May 1985 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

»No, I am very sick! Why don't you do me the favor of curing me? My stomach is very sore! It hurts me very much and I want you to take out this sickness I have in my stomach!«¹²² answered the armadillo.

»Let's see!« said the jaguar, who was thinking of taking the opportunity to eat him, since he had told him to suck his stomach.

»You,« said the armadillo, »put yourself here in the middle of my stomach!« But when the jaguar began to suck a little bit, the armadillo closed his shell and squeezed his nose and his whole mouth, [so] he could not open it. And since his mouth was [stuck] to the armadillo's belly, it was blocking his breathing. The jaguar wanted to take his mouth out, and he grabbed like this with his hand, but he could not take it out because [the armadillo's carapace] was so strong [so tight].

[So] immediately the jaguar was choking, running from one side to the other, hitting it with its paws, until it fell down. [But the armadillo] did not loosen [his grip] yet. [When] a day had passed, he loosened his grip, little by little, until it seemed to him that the jaguar was dead.

And so the jaguar died.

9.12. The Bat Kills His Wife¹²³

Now there is another story that we are going to tell now. I believe there was a man called 'Asuus (bat). What it is called in Spanish, I don't know ... - »murcielago«, they say.

This man was engaged to marry a girl [and] they say that one day they got married.

[But] there is no lack of things, of the [bad] customs of men, nor of the women.¹²⁴ And it turns out that one day, they say, the woman fell in love with another man. There were about three men, they say, who were like that. And

¹²² Here he refers to the cattle-raising population of Creole or Mestizo origin.

¹²³ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M184. The narrator was **Celestino M'ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 8 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹²⁴ Here the original phrase is: »And there is no lack of the things that are customs among the people.«

that bat [began to] suspect her. And he said, out of anger, »I had better kill this woman so she won't do any more things to me, behind my back!«¹²⁵

They say that he was very bad with her because she lusted for¹²⁶ other men. And they say that one night he grabbed her like this. So, so that people did not know, he bit her nose, under her nose. And when he had cut that, then he made a tiny little gash, and [then] people didn't know what had happened. She also did not have a wound, nothing, because that beast killed the woman to suck blood, just that. He always did it this way.

And when dawn came, the girl's parents found their daughter dead. They were looking for her wound. A blow, yes, she had, but – what was it that had been done? And the bat itself, it stopped by, saying, »I don't know what happened to my mistress! I don't know! I want to know too. Someone must have come to kill my mistress.«

And he defended himself against everything. He was supporting the people. He said, »I also want to spy on that man who is going around like this.« And he looked at his wife for a long time. And the people were waiting, like this. They were quiet, silent.¹²⁷ Then again [the bat] began to speak, »Now I am going to hunt the men who have hunted down my lady! I want to kill them, all three of them! Because I am very angry with them!«

It was because of them, that he had killed his mistress.

And those people, the three men, they say that one night they began to tell another friend that, »Tonight we are going to sleep outside, [because] it is very hot inside.«

So, they went to sleep outside. And they got careless because they did not know what was going on over there. And they slept outside. And the bat came to spy on them. And when he got there, he began to do the same thing he had done with his lady, cutting all their noses, and then they died. And he began to suck the blood, they say. And when morning came, they say the three men were dead. And there was no wound.

¹²⁵ Here the narrator says: »behind me«.

¹²⁶ Here the narrator uses the expression: »was jealous with«.

¹²⁷ Here the original sentence is: »And when he weighed his wife, then indeed, for a while, the people, who were quiet, waited, silences had begun then once more.«

Then, one night they say they got together among themselves, the compatriots,¹²⁸ and they said, »Now we can spy on him [the person who has done this], who it is ... I notice that it should be the bat who has done this in this way. He himself does it [kills] in this form. So, we can gather together to arrive at his house, and I think it is better that we kill him also.«

And they were ready to kill him, and when the people came to his house they said, »You are the one who has done this! You have done it to those men and to your mistress too! That's right! But why did you do it like that? Then it is better that you die for it too!«

But he defended himself and said, »No! I also want to know, I am supporting you! I also want to spy on the one who is doing it this way, in this manner. I also want to spy on them to help you too. Or maybe I can do something, if it's someone ...«

So people believed him. [But] one day, again, one said, »No! It has to be him!«

So they pursued him. And when they got to his house, again they said, »Now, you must die! Because, how many people have you killed?«

Then they grabbed the bat and said, »Now, we are going to kill you!«

And when they grabbed him they said, »You are the devil! You are Satan! That's why you like to suck blood! Now we kill you and you are not going to live like a person anymore. Now you will fly in the air. And you're always going to have only one meal, you are just going to suck blood. And like, like 'ahàt'¹²⁹ ... like Satan likes to drink blood when he has killed somebody!«

And so they urged (ordered) him, so they said. Then [he died] and the soul flew out into the air. And then they said to him, »Now, you are no longer going to be together with us [but] you are always going to chase whatever animal you find in the forest; and you are going to suck its blood out there in the wild. And you are no longer going to eat good [things], [but only blood]!«

Thus he was handed over. So, the bat flew away in the air, he went far away from the people because of that. And until now he is in the wild. When he sees a donkey, or a cow, that is in the wild, he likes to suck its blood. Because that has been, from the beginning, his habit.

And this story, that's it, is also over!

¹²⁸ The original text uses the Spanish expression »paisanos«, which means ›countrymen‹ of the same ethnic group, [here:] of the 'Weenhayek.

¹²⁹ Translator's note: The 'Weenhayek term for evil spirits and demons.

9.13. The Rhea and the Toads Have a Running Competition¹³⁰

Now we can tell one more story.

They say that the people got together. And they set up a table. And no one was there, but they wanted to make an election so that everyone who wanted to be president, as a government, [could present themselves].

And they put a free chair there at that table, a chair where he had to sit. Nobody was sitting there. And they thought, »Let's see, who is it that is going to win?«

[And to qualify to be president] they organized a competition, they made the election in the form of a race. Then the rhea made fun of the toads. And the toads said to the rhea, »We can try to run a race, to see who is going to win that chair to be like a president!«

Well, the rhea agreed and said, »All right, let's have a competition; let's race!«

But in front of the toads he said, »But you all are not going to be able to run. And I run intensely ...«

Then a toad answered, »Yes, I think I will be able to«

»Ah,« said the rhea, »you all are just hopping around. How are you going to be able to run?«

But the toad [insisted], saying, »Yes, I can run. And now, if you don't believe me, let's try. But I don't know who will win ...«

Then the toads [gathered] and began to chat among themselves. There were many toads gathered together. And [among themselves] they said, »Now yes, we are going to do one thing ... Do you know what we are going to do? Now at each stretch one [of us] is going to stand. I am going to stand there first. And when the rhea passes us], well, then one has to jump in front of him and then, [when the rhea passes him], the one who is further ahead has to jump over there [in front of the rhea] and continue ahead, until we reach the chair ...«

So between several [toads they divided up the distance] and they say that in each stretch they put one. And when they were ready to play, he who was waiting near the chair, said [to the rhea], »Now yes, we are ready.«

So the toads started the race with the rhea. And the rhea started to run. But the toad went ahead and hopped far away, for the toad always has that habit of

¹³⁰ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M008. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 6 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

hopping. So he hopped hard, and hopped far, [like running hard]. And first [he was winning] but after a while they say the rhea won.

But when the rhea passed one toad, there was another toad already ahead, running (jumping). And when the rhea looked ahead, he said, »Oh, the toad is already over there, how intensely he is running! And how could it be that he seems to have stayed behind?«

But the rhea did not realize that the toad [that was now running] was not the same one that had come along with him a moment ago, but was another that had entered [the race] just then. But the [new] toad crossed the rhea's path, strong and already left the rhea far behind. But the rhea kept running, coming closer until [he passed the toad and] also left him behind.

[However] when the rhea was approaching [the chair], and he was close, and it seemed that there was [only] one part left, he happened to look ahead [and saw the toad again].

»He has already gone over there again? He is ahead? But how is it [possible]? He is running hard!«

Then the rhea already started to run even harder. Because at first he did not think the toad was going to run hard. But now he was running very hard – until he was seized by a tremendous tiredness. He felt so tired, until he could not run anymore. Anyway, when he looked ahead [he saw the toad there].

»There goes the toad, running hard ... How can it be? So [it seems that] the toad knew how to run hard ...«

The rhea was already very tired. And he was walking more and more [slowly] onward. And it happened that as he was arriving, approaching the chair and the table, suddenly [another toad] crossed his path, and when the rhea [was just about to reach] the chair, [to sit down] and thus win the race, the other one passed him, hopped up and sat on the chair.

»Haha!« said the toad, »Now I have beaten you!«

»But what a thing, toad! Each time you lost, and then each time you came out ahead of me ... How can that be?« asked the rhea.

»It is because I ran hard!« said the toad. And he continued, »Now I am the one in charge. Now I am like the government, like the president now.«

But the people did not agree. [Someone] said, »But why is the toad there? It cannot be that he has won [the race against the rhea]. Ahem! How can it be? But it does not matter, [if it is that] he has won this way, fine, he has won ...«

That's how the ancients told it ... That's it. I finish the story.

9.15. The Rhea and the Tick Have a Running Competition¹³¹

Now I am going to tell one more thing. I am going to tell of another race. [Because] when *Wààn'lhàj*, the rhea, returned from the [first race against the toad],¹³² he met *Jweeky'etaj* [the tick], walking slowly as he usually does. And it so happened that the rhea began to mock him, the tick, saying, »Well, why don't we go and have a running competition?«

And the tick replied, »But, [why not?], I can do it. No problem, I can run with you!«

But the rhea mocked him, »Ha ha! How will you be able to run, if you don't run, or anything?«

»Yes, yes, yes! I'm running now. If you do not believe me, we are going to compete¹³³ in a race! Let's see if I can't run. Yes, I know how to run!«

»Well, then let's just run,« [said the rhea].

And when they got [a little further] there, then there was an empty place (plain). Then the rhea said, »Now yes, here we are going to be!«

And the tick was getting ready to jump to that feather of *Wààn'lhàj* [which is] near his backside. And when the rhea started to run, then the tick jumped to the back feather, just like that. And it turns out that when the rhea looked back [all the time he saw the tick].

»Here it comes,« he said to himself. »It seems that this tick is running hard. He keeps coming!«

So now the rhea, every time he looked back [and saw the tick, he said to himself], »Here he comes! He is running hard!«

But he did not know that the tick was hanging on to his feather back there. [So] he kept running and running, harder and harder, until he could not run anymore.

But when he looked back [he saw the tick and said], »Here comes the tick! How can he be running so hard?«

¹³¹ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M009. The narrator was **Celestino Màànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 6 December 1983 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹³² See myths nos. 008 and 304.

¹³³ The narrator uses the verb ›to play‹.

And when they reached the table, the rhea fell (to the ground from fatigue).¹³⁴ And they say that the tick began to hop, saying, »Ha ha! Did you see, rhea? I beat you, then! How could you say I do not know to run? I know how to run! Look how I beat you!«

But they say that the rhea was already very tired. He was so tired that he could not run anymore. But the other one calmly jumped over there, and then he said to him, »Ha ha! Here am I! I can run!«

But now he [the rhea] answered, »Let us run again ...«

But the tick said to him, »No! I've already beaten you! What were we going to do again?«¹³⁵

Then, they say that the tick also beat the rhea when they played (did a) race.

Then I believe that this is the story that I knew. And now I think that's just it, that I have told what I can say ...

9.18. The Toad Looks for Honey¹³⁶

There was a time when a group of families lived in a very good place, where there was a large lagoon. And [their homes] were right there. And that group was very scarce of food (lacked a lot of food). And they didn't know what to do to get food, because it was very difficult for them to find [the honey of] *noowalhek* or *chiguana*.¹³⁷ They had to spend a [whole] day searching around there, in the trees, to go to the places where there was a lot of bush, so they could catch (find) the trees with a thick crown.

¹³⁴ The use of the word ›table‹ in this context is not very clear. There are no ›tables‹ (or tabletops) in the Western sense in the Gran Chaco. Possibly it refers to the same (presidential) ›table‹ of myth no. 008.

¹³⁵ Here follows a comment that seems unsuitable: »But I don't know what I can do to be so close.«

¹³⁶ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narrative has the classification number M307. The narrator was **Hilario 'Nohit'àànhen Segundo**. It was recorded on 8 April 1985 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹³⁷ Translator's note: The 'Weenhayek and Spanish terms for a species of honey wasp (*Brachygastra lecheguana*) and its honey (cf. vol. 6, pp. 291f., and Jan-Åke Alvarsson (1988): *The Mataco of the Gran Chaco. An Ethnographic Account of Change and Continuity in Mataco Socio-Economic Organization*. Uppsala/Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell International (Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology, 11), pp. 288-291).

But then there was (appeared) their friend the toad. He was always there, on the river bank. And what did he say?

»Now we have to eat *chiguana*, because at this time [their nests] are loaded with worms [larvae] and they have lots of honey! So, there is no hunger, we have something to eat!«

But what he was doing was watching the little bees there on the shore of the lagoon.¹³⁸ When they arose, he was watching where they were going. And [then] he followed them like this, from stretch to stretch, and after a while he reached [their nest] and then he began to take out *chiguana* [honey].

[Promptly] he returned again to the lagoon. And the people [were] just watching. And so, then, people already started with this way of following [the *chiguana*'s flight]. People then knew how to find *noowalhek* easily.

9.26. The Brocket Leaves Her Child at Home¹³⁹

We begin to tell a story that says that there was a brocket, and that this brocket had a son. And they had a home, a little house.

And they say that from time to time [the bush caught fire] and a fire burned all the bush where they lived. And they say that every time the fire passed near their house, but it never touched the house itself, where the son was.¹⁴⁰ But it seemed like it was getting closer and closer every time

And one day, when the brocket was about to go out to the bush to forage, she said to her son, »My little son, stay here in the house!«

But they say that the youngling was still a little boy and had not gotten used to staying [alone], because he was small ... Then his mother said to him, »Stay here, don't be afraid! Our grandfather always just passes by here, your grandfather will not do anything! Do not be afraid of him!«

Then the son answered, »Well, then alright, I will not be afraid ... Go on ahead, mommy! When your grandfather comes, [I will be calm] ...«

¹³⁸ Here is a description of the 'Weenhayek way of looking for the ›chiguana‹ honey. See vol. 6 for additional details.

¹³⁹ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M151. The narrator was **Celestino M à à n h y e j a s G ó m e z**. It was recorded on 26 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹⁴⁰ Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted.

They say that they called the fire their »grandfather«. Then, when the fire ran, they said that »grandfather was passing by« ...¹⁴¹

Well, the brocket went to the bush, searching for something to eat. They say that her food was algarroba; algarroba and then some other things. So she went to do something there. They say that is how the brocket did it every day, she went out foraging to support her son. She always brought back algarroba fruit for her son.

But it happened that [the forest caught fire again]. And the fire was reaching that little house where the brocket's son was. And the fire was getting closer and closer to the house where the boy was. And his mother was absent, looking for something to eat for her son.¹⁴²

But it turned out that the fire knew that this boy was afraid. So it followed him and suddenly passed by where the little house was and began to burn the house, and that little boy who was there ...

And the boy [was afraid and frightened], »What am I going to do? What can I do?«

But the fire did not pass. It burned the little boy. He was burned all over. His body became dry and then he became peeled, with his teeth showing. His lips were burned and only his teeth were left.

Then, when it was time for his mother to arrive, she saw the fire passing over her house. And when she did not see her little boy, who was always out there [to welcome her], who was always getting happy and started laughing ...

[But this time] the boy didn't get up but just stayed [lying] there. Then she said, »Oh! My poor son! Every time when I have arrived at home, I have found him laughing, content ...«

But they say this time she found her son heavily burned. He did not have ears or lips anymore. Everything had been burned, only his tooth [could be seen]. And his mother said to him, »My poor little son! Always when he sees me, when I am arriving from the bush he always laughs and is content.«

But this time, when she was arriving, they say that her son was burning. And she stayed very sad because her son had been burned. And she cried for him. And she began to sing a song, that in the language of the 'Weenhayek goes:

»Tsu, tsu, tsu! Tsoo'na'atajilah ... A'a'a-yàs-aje-e' ...«

¹⁴¹ Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted.

¹⁴² Here the narrator repeats himself, the repetition has been omitted.

This is when 'yàs-aje' is said, it means: ›it is my little son‹, ›my boy has died‹, this is what it says ...

Then she just kept crying like this. This because her son had been burned.

The story is over as well. That's it!

9.28. The Puma Tests if the Brocket Has Teeth¹⁴³

After this I have to tell one more story ...

They say that there was a brocket and a puma.¹⁴⁴ And the puma was beginning to taunt the brocket. He said to the brocket, »Now what are you going to do since you have no teeth? You have nothing, you only have antlers and hooves ... But I do, I have my nails ...«

And they say that in ancient times, at first, the puma had no teeth. So there was no way to hurt any animal, because he had no teeth at all ... So they say that the animals were making fun of each other. And the brocket said to the puma, »You are just like that [without teeth] ... Maybe you cannot do anything to me, because I have everything ...«

Then they began to fight among themselves. They fought, and then the brocket pierced the puma with his antlers. And they say that, with his antlers and hooves, the brocket protected his own life. They say that the brocket has sharp hooves to be able to scratch the puma, and he also has his [very sharp] antlers. And they say that the antlers went deep into the puma's flesh each time, until the puma died. And they say that in this way the brocket killed the puma.

Then the brocket went elsewhere, well pleased, because the puma had died, so greatly because the puma had mocked him, saying that he had nothing. And he [the brocket] said, »Now yes! I for my part killed the puma.«

And the brocket was quite pleased. He [felt he] had power.

Then someone, some man, we do not know who it was, found the dead puma, killed by the brocket. And when he found him [he was astonished] that such a beast, such a big animal, could not defend himself.

¹⁴³ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M153. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 26 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹⁴⁴ The original translation uses the word »león« [›lion‹], which, in local Spanish, refers to the puma. In 'Weenhayek, the term is *t'owaalhaj*, and in Latin *Felis concolor*.

»What a thing! This beast is big, and the brocket is small!« he said. »Now the puma has to receive a defense. He has to have his nails, [but he also] has to receive teeth. That is how it has to be!«

And they say that one day the puma came out with teeth. And the man said, »Now, no one can do anything to the puma, because now he has tremendous things to defend himself with!«

And he said to the puma himself, »Now you are the man who can chase all the animals of the wild. Now, you can chase even the brocket ...«

Now that the puma had his teeth and also his nails, he then wanted to get even with the brocket for what he had done to him. And he felt good, good ...¹⁴⁵

They say that he began to walk [looking for an opportunity] to get even with the brocket. He had no [interest] in chasing another creature, but only the brocket. And they say that one day he found him.

And he began to watch him, and at siesta time, when the brocket was resting in the shade, he took the chance [and attacked him]. And it turns out that [because of the surprise attack] the brocket did nothing, because the puma took advantage while he was sleeping.

But when the puma jumped up, the brocket [was alerted], because he never sleeps very hard, and he ran away. And the brocket knows how to run hard. And the man said to the puma, »Now you are going to chase him! Because if you all do not catch him, you are going to be screwed by hunger since now you can live only on brocket! You will not be able to hunt any other creature, only brockets.«

And of course the brocket had wronged the puma. So because of that, he chased him to take revenge on the brocket that had killed his fellow countryman. So, that is how it happened in those times, that is how it happened with the puma.

And so it was that if the puma did not find the brocket while it was sleeping, then he was hungry; he was very hungry, because he had to look for exclusively brocket to eat. If there was no brocket, then he was screwed. He had to forage a lot because he could not catch another creature. That's how it was in those days, they say.

And now this story is over. That's it.

¹⁴⁵ Here the narrator repeats himself. The repetition has been omitted. In addition, some marginal changes have been made to the chronology in order to tell the story in accordance to the original version.

9.29. The War of the Fish¹⁴⁶

We are also going to tell one more story.

They say that there was a hole in the riverbed¹⁴⁷ where there was a fish, a single fish. So this fish always came out with its mouth open like this, above the water. And they say that one day a catfish came and swallowed the fish whole. And when the others were missing him, they say that the other *sábalos*¹⁴⁸ became angry. And they said, »Now, what shall we do? I think it would be pretty to get together and get even with the other one that the catfish killed. Then we can do something against him ... We have our support, we have the dorado, the one with his teeth, he can help us! Although we do not have teeth, but the dorado will help us; he – with other bad critters that are with us – like the old hag and others.«

Well, the *sábalos* began to gather, many *sábalos*, together with the dorado. And they asked him to help them battle against the catfish, to avenge the other one he had eaten.

So the *sábalos* began to battle, to fight against the catfish. They fought [hard]. Sometimes the catfish swallowed one of them, the small fish, but they say that the dorado also hurt the catfish. [However] the catfish was hurting the *sábalos*, he was scraping them with his teeth. The catfish has something like sandpaper on its teeth, there in front, and with that it was scraping all the tarpon, so they were skinned. And they say that this way the catfish infested all of them, and they were left without scales.

So the tarpon thought like this, »Now, what do we do? We have many wounds, yes. But what do we do now?«

But another said, »Well, we are already here. Let us think well about it! I recommend that we talk to *yeelajitaj*, the fish called ›the old woman‹ who was there in that hole in the riverbed.«

Then they decided to ask *yeelajitaj*, »You know how to heal wounds, don't you?«

¹⁴⁶ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M155. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 26 April 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹⁴⁷ The original text uses the local Spanish term »madrijón«, possibly derived from »madriguera«.

¹⁴⁸ Translator's note: The Spanish term »sábalos« refers to *Prochilodus* sp.

She said, »Yes, I am like a healer ... I know how to heal.«

Then, when [that phase] of the war had passed, they say that the fish went to *yeelajitaj* with their wounds. They started to be with *yeelajitaj*. And she began to heal. And as this is the custom of a *hiyawu'* (shaman), they say that she began to suck, every wound. And sometimes she took out bones, and sometimes she took out scales; she took out everything that the catfish had put in. Then, after another day, they say that the *sábalos* left there, healthy. And among themselves, they said, »Now yes, we have our *hiyawu'* (shaman), and our hospital we have here ... Now we are not afraid, not even if it hurts us [a lot], because our *yeelajitaj* is helping to heal us.«

And they say that *yeelajitaj* kept healing and the catfish could not do anything, because the catfish was outside the place where she was, while the *sábalos* lived together with *yeelajitaj*. So right there, they had their hospital.

That's how they say the story went, but now it's over. That's just it! And that's as far as it goes. I tell what I have heard. I can't say any more.

10.13. The Man Who Married a Star¹⁴⁹

They say that there was a man [who had the same problem] as the man of whom we have told a while ago [*'Aasnot'àj*].¹⁵⁰ They say that the women did not want this man either. He always wanted to have a woman, but he could not because he was a little ugly. And they say that one day, one night, he had been lying there, thinking, »Now, what do I do? I need to have a woman!«

He was lying there, thinking, »I don't know what to do. I think I had better do something here. Now I am going to do the test! I'm going to call a star, and maybe I can do something with her!«

¹⁴⁹ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M350. The narrator was **Celestino M'àanhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 15 April 1985 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

¹⁵⁰ The recording begins with a proclamation of authenticity: »Now we are beginning to tell one more story, which we have told here, as Bolivians (*'Weenhayek*), and in accordance with what I have spoken now, I will speak the little Spanish that I can. And it may be that the countrymen (other Mataco peoples) have told this story a little differently. I, for my part, tell it this way, since it is our part (form) here as Bolivians. And I happen to have heard many tales told to me by my grandparents, all of them.«

It happened so that the man, when he had thought thus, then began to shout. He was already naming (directly addressing) the star. He said, »Star, come to me, to be with me forever, together!«

And it turns out that the star answered him, and that she was a woman. So a woman came to where he was.¹⁵¹ A nice, pretty woman came to him, and they say that [all of a sudden] she was by his side. And the man was pleased, because he had already received a woman. The star had answered when he had called her.

So the woman was with him all night. [Then] the woman said, »Now, I am not going again to my house or, or from where I have come from, I am going to be with you! But, now what I entrust you with is that when it is daytime, you have to keep me somewhere over there. Because if it is daytime, I cannot be like this. But I can be (with you) like this every night.«

And the man kept her, and put her, the star, there in a llica. But they say that at night she always went out and slept together with the man. And they say that the man [no longer] lacked anything.

But the other young men began to make fun of him on account of the woman. There, among the young men who were gathered together, they said,¹⁵² »What a thing, why does the woman allow herself be married to this man? This man is not very good. And to me, he disgusts me, and how is it that the beautiful woman who is with him, that she is not disgusted by him?«

And they say that one day one of the young men asked her that question, »Why did you marry this man? Because this man is ugly, and he is not like one of us, who are good like that, pretty and likable.«

But the woman answered, saying, »Of course, because I know that you, you will not lack women. But I know that this man needs a woman – so, no matter, I will be with him ...«

And in the evening they say that [the others] had chatted with her, and the woman said, »Now, I do not like how the other countrymen treat me. I had better get away from here ...«

So, they had chatted, and [she] said, »If you want to catch up with me, then I can explain the entire route to you. The path you are going to see is my path.

¹⁵¹ Here the narrator repeats himself. For that reason, this phrase has been omitted: »When he arrived there, they say that, of course but a woman came, they say.«

¹⁵² This sentence has been heavily edited, the original reads: »Among them they say that he had been there, gathered together the young men said, ...«

Because the path where I am going, is going to be well lit. Then you are going to follow this path. But I entrust (tell) to you that there is a [single] fire, which is in the middle of the road. There, in my town, it is very cold. Maybe you won't be able to stand it there. But there is a fire, only one fire, that is there in the sky, only one fire. But that fire, I advise (warn) you, that fire is very dangerous. But if you are cold, then you can get close to it. But you should not stoke it, nor touch any ember, because when it starts to blaze, then it will kill you, it will burn you all over. It's better that you, when you want to get hot, then that you get hot slowly, and that you do not get too close either.«

And so she had instructed him. So, that night the woman left again. And the man, when morning came, they say he was in sorrow on account of the woman who had left. He had blamed the other young men, he had told them, »It is because of you, my countrymen, that my lady has gone again, and I have to catch up with her!«

Thus he had thought. And he went to catch up with her. They say that he went up to the sky. And he could also go up with the help of the woman. Then, when he was coming that way, he saw a path that was burning. And it seems that he had realized what she had been instructing him [meant], that »this is how my path is going to be.«

So, he went on and on there. They say there were a lot of people out there on the road that he knew to ask. He would ask in each and every encampment where he arrived, he would ask about the time the woman had passed or if they had seen a woman pass by. They say that they said that the woman had passed at such and such an hour. So he went on.

And when he arrived at a little house, so far away, it was already late. And when he arrived at that little house, they say that he met an old woman who lived there, alone in the house; she lived alone in that part of the house. And when he arrived he asked her, »Grandma, haven't you seen a woman who passed by here?«

»Yes,« she said, »I have seen her. She passed by this morning.«

Then, the hour was no longer enough for anything, so the man said, »Now, granny, I am staying here. Tomorrow I will go again.«

»Well,« she said. »Just stay here, that is fine!«

But when the man wanted to stay in one part, they say that the old woman did not allow it. And that old woman, they say she was a bird they call

›partridge‹. And every time he asked her, »Grandma, in this little place, I would like to sleep here!«

But the old woman said, »No, this very place is my place! [It] is that I always change my place. Once I wake up, I have to change over there.«

And they say that she chose a better place and that he [acquiesced to] her. [So it happened several times], until finally the man could not stay inside the little house and had to sleep outside.

So, they say that the next day he left again. And when he got to a certain part, he already felt the cold, colder and colder, until he could not [stand it]. But he just kept walking. And when he came to a place, they say he had found a fire burning, sparking. Then he realized, »Now, this is the fire that the woman told me I was going to find ...«

So, they say he was getting close, [since] he was quite cold. And when he arrived there, [it was for him as] usual when one is very cold, and so he wanted to snuggle up to the fire. But he had remembered what she had taught him, that he must not stoke it. So he did not stoke it.

But then, in the end, it seems that he felt even colder. And when he felt even colder, then it came to his mind that, »Now, why don't you stoke it a little, so that it burns more? Because I am cold here and the fire is not doing anything for me. Maybe this fire [has not been tended to]. I've been here for a while now, and it has not done anything for me. But [if] I hollow it out slowly, and stoke it better, that it burns more, that way I will warm up better ...«

So, they say that he began to stoke a firebrand, which he put higher up so that the fire would burn. And it turns out that when he stoked it, then it began to spark and [as] a little wind came, it was [even] worse. They say that it was blazing and that it covered [the place] where it was, then it began to burn. And all his flesh was burned, and they say that nothing was left but his bones.

But when the man had been burned, then his father and mother¹⁵³ were missing him. They heard news about where their son had gone. And, there was a bird called ›owl‹. And the owl had picked up those bones [of the man] and brought them back. They say that he had a llica that we call *qataatsaj* in our language. And with that llica they say that he had grabbed the bones that were next to the fire. Then he began to pack them away, or fill that llica.

¹⁵³ In the original ›fathers‹ and ›mothers‹ are in the plural form.

And that bird came with the news. He is something like a messenger. And he was carrying those bones, and [then] he came with those bones, and returned them to the ground (to the earth).¹⁵⁴

So he brought the bones. And every time the bones moved, it seemed to have a sound. And when the bird was coming, near [the house of] the old folks, it seemed like it was singing. There was like a thing that sounded where he was flying. And then, finally, he came down [a little] more. And all of a sudden, they say that he stretched out a thing where the parents were. And when it fell to the ground, they say it sounded. And when they went to check, they say they had found the bones. Then they said, »These are the bones of our son! Something must have happened! Well, we know it is he! That's it!«

So they already knew that something had happened with that man ...

10.30. The Woman Who Married the Moon¹⁵⁵

There was a night when a woman was lying outside, looking at the clear sky and she exclusively saw the stars which were beautiful. And the biggest [celestial body] she saw was the moon. Then she was thinking, »What would the moon be like? Pretty? And I need a man now. It would be good if the moon came.« And she began to say, »Come moon, for I love you, I want to marry you!«

And the moon heard the woman's voice. And she fell asleep and when she awoke [after] some time, during the night, she saw that beside her was a man, very beautiful, very white! And then she said, »Who are you, sir?«

Then he said to her, »But you had called me.«

»Ah, it is you! How nice! Welcome, because I want to marry you.«

»Alright, but you know that I am going to live with you in hiding for the time being, I do not want anyone to see me.«

»But how are we going to do it? We have to hide you ...«

¹⁵⁴ Here we are dealing with two cosmological divisions or levels, that is the ›above‹ (*puule'*), the overworld, and the ›below‹ (*hoonhat*) the underworld, see vols. 6 and 10.

¹⁵⁵ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M308. The narrator was **Hilario 'Nohit'àànhen Segundo**. It was recorded on 8 April 1985 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

And the night passed. In the early morning, she had put him inside and locked the door and said she did not want any visitors, because she was busy in the house all day long. But in the evening he came out and still nobody knew. But after [a while] they say that he appeared to other people and people saw that he was very white, very beautiful.

»But what was this woman going to do? What was she going to feed this man? Where was she going to get food? Because these kind of people are used to eating special things.« And he said, »Do not worry about this, everything you people eat I am going to eat. And where is your father's enclosure [farm]?« they say he said, »Let's go for a walk!«

And they went to her father's enclosure. And the weather was already dry because the months of the time of the fruit, of harvest, of corn, squash, pumpkins, and beans had already passed. All that harvest time had already passed. The time was dry and [there were] only some dry branches that were left there, but very dry. And she took her man there and he said to her, »Gather all the dry vines of the melons and of the squash!«

And she gathered the dried vines of the melon, pumpkin and beans. And when she was gathering them over there, he stretched out his hand and suddenly some very green little plants appeared and also in another pile melon, beans, and pumpkin appeared. Plants full of fruit, very beautiful and ripe melons. Oh! The woman was surprised.

»What is this? But it is all for eating!«

And she began to grab, to pull out the best fruit.

»Let's eat first, then fill the llica and go to the house,« [she said].

They ate ripe melon until they were full. And they had looked for very ripe pumpkins and had filled their llica nicely. They had also taken out ripe beans. In that way they filled their llica until they could barely carry it home. But when they left, the plants disappeared again. They only took the fruits home.

And when they arrived, all the neighbors [asked] where these people had their patch of plants. Now nobody expected or thought they were going to eat melon, but now they were eating melon. And they were shelling beautiful, tender, lovely beans; beautiful pumpkins, just picked, the peel was just hardening, beautiful.

Well. One day passed. And the next day the man said, »Let us go to the bush!«

And [it turned out that] the time of the algarrobo had long since passed. [Still the moon asked], »Where do you know to go, with your mother, to look for algarrobo? Where are the algarrobo trees, nice and sweet? Let us go there!«

And they went where the woman knew to go [with her mother]. When they got there, he climbed up and suddenly as he was shaking the branches, a lot of algarrobo fruit began to fall, very ripe, a lot of algarrobo, beautiful, big. Oh! The woman was pleased that there was going to be food and she began to pick it up and filled her big llica.

They arrived at her house [with a lot of algarrobo].

»But where are they bringing algarrobo from?« [the people asked].

Nobody expected or thought that they were going to eat [algarrobo] because the time (the season) had already passed. And so they kept bringing one thing at a time. And the woman was very pleased with him, because they were eating a lot and nothing was lacking. [Because] when he first arrived the people had said, »Where is this man going to get food from?« And now there was no lack of food on any day. They had algarrobo, pumpkin, they were looking for honey, they had everything.

But suddenly the time came when he had to change. So he said to the woman, »Now it is the time that I have to change. I have to go to the other side. I have to go, but you are going to stay here until I come out again and then I am going to come back.«

Well, she was thinking, grieving; »What was I going to do now?«

And that night, at a certain hour, he went out and she was crying. »What am I going to do now, I have to follow him!«

But he had told her before that she could not go with him, because the road was bad and she would not be able to walk [there]. »Well,« she said, »I am not going to follow you, I am going to wait for you.«

Well, he went out. But she could not stay back. She wanted to go too, after him ... When she saw that he was leaving; she wanted to follow his footsteps. She followed decently, decently, until she came to a very big lake where you could not see the [other] shore. And she was shouting, calling out to her husband, »Where are you? Come!«

And he, on the other side, heard her but could not go back to take her. What she did was to call the crocodile, a big caiman She said, »Grandfather 'Alhuutaj! Come here!«

And suddenly it [the caiman] appeared, sticking out its big nose like this, and on its head was a plant, like a big cattail; on its broad, big shoulder.

»What say you?«

»That you do me the favor of carrying me to the other side, I want to catch up with my husband,« she said.

»Well,« answered the caiman, »Just climb on!«

And she sat on top of him and he began to swim over the water, slowly, slowly. And as [the lake] was wide, the woman grew weary.

»Hurry up, grandfather! I want to arrive!«

»We are going to get there already,« he said, »we are going to get there alright ...«

Slowly he swam along and stopped for a while.

»But, hurry up, grandpa! I want to get there!« she said.

»Alright,« he said, »we are going to get there already, we are going to get there alright ...«

And he reached the deepest part, and there he just stopped.

»Well now, my little daughter. Speak ill of me! That you say: ›That's how you are, grandfather. You're savage, you're a husk, you have your rear pierced, you've got big eyes!‹ Speak thus to me, my little daughter!«

»But grandpa, how could I talk like that? Just take me onward, very fast, so I can catch up with my husband ...«

Thus the [caiman] started off, slowly like that. And in another stretch he said, »Let's see, speak ill of me, my daughter!«

»Fine,« [she said], »I'm going to speak ill ...«

But when she was speaking ill of him, the caiman submerged below and began to make a big burst, jumped into the air and made big waves in the water. And the woman appeared at a distance as if she was standing on a firm thing, there in the water, looking up, looking all around. And again the caiman was lost.

And suddenly the woman appeared next to it, right there below, in the ravine, in the deepest part. She was standing there. And the moon was there, looking at his wife and she was standing there. [He] was suffering a lot.

»I told you not to follow me because the road is bad! But now that you have passed, there is nothing to do!«

So he continued the journey, until he came to a part, and [then] went back the same way. And he acted as if he could not pass. So then he called the grandfather caiman. And he came.

»Take me to the side!« The moon said to him.

And the moon got on and the caiman did as with the woman. So when they got to the middle of the lake and the moon spoke ill of the yacare, they say that this caused him to turn over at a shore. But the moon wanted to do to him as he had done to his wife ...

»But you are not going to do anything to me! Because I am greater than you!«

And when the moon overturned him, he went lower. Then the moon took his wife and went, flew up, taking her to the house.

The woman went away pleased, although she did not want to leave, because she had become accustomed to being there in the water. She just went to the house for a little while, but she could not stay there, she did not want to be there in the house. So she was crying, because she wanted to be in the water. And she had just come to the water, she had escaped, and she had gone into the water again. And so the moon found no way (he found no solution), and he just went home again.

And so the story ends.

10.31. The Woman Who Married the Dog¹⁵⁶

They say that there was a woman who had caught a dog. And it turns out that this woman was single. And at that time, the story goes, there were few people and not many men. There were a lot of women and so she was in need of a man.

And after a while, they say that she had raised a dog, a big dog. And when he was a young, she slept together with the little dog until he got big. And as he grew up they had not separated, but slept together.

Then finally, of course, they say that the dog was in the mood to use this woman. And since this woman needed a man, then she accepted that the dog would use her. And when the dog had used the woman, they say she liked it. After that, every day, they say that the other countrymen saw that she went alone with her dog and when the woman did not go out to the bush, the dog always cried. And it seems that the dog demanded that they go to the bush like

¹⁵⁶ In the original collection, recorded between 1983 and 1985, this narration has the classification number M175. The narrator was **Celestino M à ànhyejas Gómez**. It was recorded on 7 May 1984 in Tuunteyh, Villa Montes, Bolivia.

that then, to be able to use that woman. And every time like that, but the others didn't notice.

And at one time, they say that she was pregnant and they did not know what had done that to her. And it had been that she had used the dog. And later, they say that the woman was pregnant, and the others asked and did not know anything.

And when she was about to give birth, then they said that the dog could not be born, because it could not. »It cannot come out,« they said. But when one had been born, then people just knew it was the dog [that he was the father] ...

One was born, but, of course, there were several. There were about six dogs (puppies) and each time she gave birth and again she gave birth. And then the last one got stuck and the woman died because of it. And then the people just knew and got scared that she had gone about in that way. In that way no one should go about!

Then people began to be afraid, why did she go about like that with the dog, to let herself be used? Well, then there was nothing to be done. The woman died because she had given birth and the last child (puppy) could not come out; it had gotten stuck. And then the woman died. They buried her and then they said, »Then that's it. After [this], we can no longer allow that [one is too close to] the dogs, because they have done this way!«

And such was the tale that I have heard also. People [already] were afraid of dogs. When one breeds dogs, then one cannot cuddle any. They have always recommended that they be put far away, because it had happened that way in the past times.

That's how the story ended!